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This Supplement consists of a FULL Report, specially drawn up for "India," of the Debates on Indian subjects in both Houses of Parliament, and questions put on such subjects and the answers given to them, arranged chronologically, from July 23 to August 6.

Imperial Parliament.

July 23.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

INDIA AND THE ARMY.

In Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates, General RUSSELL rose to call attention to the great national danger resulting from the inadequacy of our military forces to supply the wants and requirements of the Empire, and also to the poor return which the British taxpayer received for the £19,000,000 which he paid for military armament.

In the course of the debate Sir H. HAVELOCK-ALLAN said the short service system must be credited with having had one great result—it had given us an efficient army in India and the Colonies. There was no question that the 73,000 men in India and the 26,000 men in the Colonies were as efficient as any troops in the world. In addition the present system had given us a reserve of 78,000 men. It was true that for economical reasons the reserve was never called up, but he believed that whenever they were they would soon recover all their old soldierly habits and efficiency. He maintained, however, that the present home army was inefficient. What that army was required to do was to garrison India and the Colonies, to garrison England against invasion, and to supply those expeditionary forces required from time to time. . . . . Another defect arose in connexion with the rule in regard to India—that no man was to be sent to India unless he had attained the age of 20. He knew one regiment of 700 men, 300 of whom were over 20 years of age. That battalion had to supply 250 men for the battalion abroad, so that it was left only 50 men who were over 20 years of age and had one year's service. The consequence was that while the men abroad were good men, fit for soldiers, the battalions at home were reduced more or less to a mere school of boys. The remedy was that there should be established for every battalion in the first army corps a depôt of 400 men which could feed the battalions abroad.

Mr. BRODRICK, in the course of his speech, said he must remind the Committee of what an enormous advance the army had made since the abolition of long service. There was always in the House a certain amount of opinion in favour of returning to the long service system. But it was forgotten that under long service great difficulty was found between Great Britain and India in keeping up the army of 160,000 men. When the men came home from India, there was very often not one man for three to send back from the depôt, and not a single man in the reserve to call up in case of war. Now we had something like 207,000 with the colours in Great Britain and India. If from that number were deducted all those soldiers in the first year of service, there remained, together with reserve, from which 10 per cent. at the outside might be deducted for those who did not respond to the call, a body of 254,000 men on whom the War Office could lay their hands to-morrow. No doubt this force was maintained at a costly rate compared with that of foreign countries; but if it were replaced by men on long-service engagements, with the pensions which would be necessary, the cost would be £7,000,000 more than the present estimates. What we had at this moment was, perhaps, the most wonderful development of the voluntary system ever known in the world. Again, as to the position of the Indian army. In old days there was great difficulty in sending 5,000 or 6,000 men a year to India and of these men 2,000 generally were under 20 years of age. Last year over 9,000 men were sent to India, and of those not a single man was under 20, or of less than one year's service. These facts ought to be taken into consideration by those who only saw the worst of the short service system.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said that, in bringing the Committee back to the larger question which was under discussion earlier in the evening, he must remind the Committee of one thing—that in dealing with the army they were dealing with an instrument, and not with a thing which was an object in itself. Our military establishments depended on our policy, and the question was, What was our policy? When the present system of linked battalions was adopted, it was founded on a calculation of the number of battalions required at home and abroad. Decade after decade we had gone on the supposition that the disproportion of those battalions was a passing incident which would ultimately disappear. But it was necessary to face the fact that there had been a great development of the public policy of the country. (Cheers.) The effect was that 30,000 men had been added to the army in the last twenty years. In India we had abandoned the old Lawrentian policy, and had the inestimable advantage of a scientific frontier, a concomitant circumstance of which was that we had now to maintain a much larger army in India than ever before. Then we had adopted the practice of occupying the remote valleys of the mountains on the frontier, which was a constant drain on our resources.

July 26.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE "FORWARD" POLICY AND ITS RESULTS.
THE TOCHI VALLEY PUNITIVE FORCE.

Mr. ROBERT WALLACE asked the Secretary of State for India whether the Tochi punitive expeditionary forces had orders to distinguish the innocent from the guilty while inflicting punishment for the offence committed against this country:

Whether Maizar and Sheranni had been demolished, and the

stores and goods found in them appropriated by the punitive forces:

Whether any limit had been placed on the number of towns and villages, which it was necessary to destroy and empty of their contents, for punitive purposes:

Whether any compensation for their losses would be made to innocent survivors when the punitive expedition had successfully completed its labours:

And whether non-military newspaper correspondents were allowed to accompany the punitive expedition.

Lord G. HAMILTON: Undoubtedly the punishment to be inflicted by the Tochi field force will be confined to those who either took an active part in the recent treacherous outrage, or were assenting parties to it. I have no information as to the demolition of Maizar and Sheranni; but the amount of destruction must depend on the attitude of the guilty tribes. If they submit, I hope that few or no villages may be destroyed. If any injury is shown to have been unjustly or inadvertently inflicted the question of compensation will no doubt be considered; but in every case the tribe as a whole must be regarded as responsible for the acts of its members. As to the newspaper correspondents, I have no information.

REPORTED OUTRAGES ON NATIVE WOMEN.

Major RASCH asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to a paragraph in the *Daily News* of Thursday last embodying a statement from the Secretary of the Indian Association to the following effect: "Two gross cases are reported of attempted outrage on Hindu girls in the Khana plague inspection camp by two European officers, who have been suspended by the Government. Pandita Ramabai writes to a newspaper of the seduction of one of her girls in the Poona plague camp, utterly demoralising the arrangements there. These cases have created a great sensation all over the country"; and whether there was any truth in either allegation.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The allegations alluded to consisted of two charges, one in connexion with a segregation camp at Khana, in Bengal, for the detention of railway passengers, and the other in connexion with the late plague camp in Poona. I have received the following reports upon them: "Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal reports that police-sergeant and military assistant-surgeon were charged with making immoral overtures to two Hindu circus girls and a Japanese prostitute in segregation huts at Khana plague inspection camp. Japanese consented, and left with police-officer; circus girls declined, and, on assistant-surgeon pressing, one of them raised alarm. Police officer dismissed; assistant-surgeon suspended. His case being further investigated. Both are of European parentage; police-sergeant born and domiciled in India." As regards the second case, the Governor of Bombay telegraphs: "Pandita Ramabai's assertions had attracted my notice, and I enquired into them early in June. The girl she mentions was not seduced in the plague camp. She was a plague patient, and was discharged cured. What became of her afterwards is not known. The assertion about utterly demoralising the arrangements in Poona camp absolutely untrue. From first to last somewhere about 500 females were admitted; nearly all had relatives or friends attending them; no complaints of violated modesty were ever made. Officer in charge saw Pandita Ramabai herself on several occasions in the hospital, but she never made any complaint to him."

July 27.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

INDIAN GUARANTEED RAILWAYS.

Sir C. CAYZER asked the Secretary of State for India whether he was aware that the East Indian Railway Company, whose railway was built by British capital, under Government guarantee, and of which the Government were now the owners by purchase, had recently purchased 7,708 tons of steel rails and fish plates from the Maryland Steel Company, of America, and that the same was being shipped from America to Calcutta, the tender of the Maryland Steel Company, of America, being nearly £1 per ton lower than any British tender:

And whether some of the other Indian guaranteed railways made it a condition of these tenders that the goods should be of British manufacture; and, if so, why the East Indian Railway Company, a Government-owned railway, could not also do so.

Lord G. HAMILTON: It has been the practice of the India Office to give the preference to British manufacturers, provided the difference in price and quality is not great. In this case I am informed that the tender accepted by the Board of the East India Railway Company appeared to be in all respects a satisfactory one as regards quality, and that by accepting in its place the lowest tenders of a British firm they would have incurred an additional charge of £8,675.

Sir C. CAYZER asked the noble lord whether, if he could not give the House the information asked for in respect to each of the tenders received, he would give the particulars to the Commercial Intelligence Committtee of the Board of Trade, in order that the best means might be ascertained of assisting British trade in its competition with foreign trade.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I may say that the tender of the Maryland Steel Company was £34,000, whilst the lowest British tender was £42,500, and I am informed that the quality of the rails was equal.

Mr. J. C. FLYNN asked whether it was customary to read to the House the figures relating to contracts entered into by public departments.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT asked whether the foreign tenderers undertook to conform to Trade Union regulations and to the provisions of the Factory Acts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Notice should be given of that question.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON said that he believed that it was not customary to give the figures of the different tenders, but that was not the question in this case. He was asked regarding the lowest British tender and the tender of the American firm.

July 29.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

REPORTED MISCONDUCT OF A DISTRICT MAGISTRATE.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been drawn to the proceedings of Mr. Meredith, District Magistrate of Lahore, who entered the court of the local First Class Magistrate during the trial of a criminal case, rebuked him on account of an order he had passed in the case, and requested him to revise it:

And whether the course of action adopted by Mr. Meredith had been taken into consideration.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I have no knowledge of this matter, except from a newspaper report with which the honourable baronet has favoured me. The case as there stated, assuming the statement to be correct, is one in which, as at present advised, I see no necessity for interfering, and which may be safely left to be dealt with by the Local Government.

THE CASE OF MR. C. KUNHI KANNAN.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN asked the Secretary of State for India whether he had received a memorial, dated March 22 last, from C. Kunhi Kannan, late Deputy-Collector of Malabar, who was convicted of bribery and served a term of imprisonment:

Whether he was aware that since petitioner's conviction important fresh evidence had been discovered, and that Mr. Moberly, District Magistrate of Malabar, had recommended that he should be given an opportunity of showing that he was convicted on evidence which was either false or so tainted as to be unworthy of belief:

And whether he would cause enquiry to be made, and if the petitioner established his innocence, would grant him a free pardon in order to vindicate his character.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The memorial in question has not yet been officially forwarded from India, but a copy which was sent to me direct reached me on the 14th of last month. I will ask the Government of India how it proposes to deal with the matter.

PAPER CURRENCY AND SILVER COINAGE.

Sir SAMUEL MONTAGU asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to the great increase in late years of the fiduciary issue of notes by the Indian Government, and to the large contraction of the paper currency, as shown by the fact that in 1893, when the mints were closed, there were: Rx. 26,401,820 total notes in circulation, Rx. 18,401,820 coin and bullion held, Rx. 8,000,000 Government securities, whereas there were, on May 31, 1897: Rx. 22,861,621 total notes in circulation, Rx. 12,861,626 coin and bullion held, Rx. 99,999,994 Government securities:

Whether the Indian Government intended to coin on their own account silver rupees sufficient to place their paper currency on a sounder basis:

And whether they would in future publish their accounts as regards currency weekly instead of monthly, so as to enable prudent bankers and merchants to provide in time against the possible danger of an extreme scarcity of currency in India.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The figures given in the hon. member's question are correct. I am not aware of any intention on the part of the Government of India to coin silver on their own account. As to the publication of accounts, which now takes place monthly in accordance with the provisions of Act No. 20 of 1882, I will communicate with the Government of India, but I can give no promise that the hon. member's suggestion will be adopted.

THE REPEAL OF THE VERNACULAR PRESS ACT.

Sir M. BHOWNAGGREE asked the Secretary of State for India whether he was aware that Lord Hartington, as Secretary of State for India in 1881, in Mr. Gladstone's Government, forwarded a despatch to the Government of India suggesting that the existing defect in the Indian Penal Code, viz., the explanation to section 124a, which made it ineffective against seditious and libellous writings, should be remedied; whether this recommendation of Mr. Gladstone's Government to strengthen the law of seditious libel was ever acted upon; and, if it was not, whether her Majesty's Government, having regard to the grave results which had followed upon the seditious writings in the vernacular press, would recommend the Government of India to introduce legislation without further delay in the manner suggested in Lord Hartington's despatch.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I am aware that it was suggested by the Secretary of State in Council in 1881 that, if it were the case that the Criminal Law of India applicable to seditious libel was practically unworkable through the effect of the explanation attached to section 124a, the existing defect in the code might be remedied by the suitable amendment of some of its provisions. For various reasons, such amendment has been from time to time postponed; but, as I have already stated, the question of legislation on this subject is now being considered afresh.

THE "FORWARD" POLICY AND ITS RESULTS.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked the Secretary of State for India whether he could give any information as to the attack upon British forces at Malakand.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The first intimation received was from Major Deane on July 26. He reported the advance of a local gathering in the Swat Valley excited by the preaching of a mad Fakir. Their attack upon the Malakand Kotal was repulsed after severe fighting. Chakdara was also attacked and communication with it interrupted. A later report showed that another attack on the camp was expected, and shortly afterwards, on the night of the 27th, telegraphic communication with Malakand was interrupted. Certain movements of troops in relief of the Malakand garrison were at once ordered. Last night telegraphic communication was restored, and information was received that the British troops were engaged throughout the 27th, and a general attack was made upon them between 8.30 p.m. and daybreak of yesterday. Desultory fighting continued all yesterday, but the assailant's were repulsed everywhere, the British loss amounting apparently to Lieutenant Costello of the 22nd Bengal Infantry wounded, 11 Sepoys killed and 42 wounded. Further attacks are expected, and the reinforcements are being pushed forward with speed.

July 30.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THE "FORWARD" POLICY AND ITS RESULTS.

Lord REAY said he wished to ask her Majesty's Government whether any further information could be given with regard to the operations in the Swat Valley, which had already resulted in the unfortunate loss of many brave men. Since putting the question on the Paper he had seen that the Secretary of State for India yesterday, in another place, mentioned that the cause of the rising of the tribes was the preaching of "Mad Mullah," but if there were any other causes he hoped they might be communicated to the House. The last part of his question referred to the area over which the rising, which seemed to be on a considerable scale, was spread.

The Earl of SELBORNE: In the unavoidable absence of my noble friend the Under Secretary of State for India, I have been asked to give the noble lord the information that he asks for. The telegrams published in the London press give information regarding the military operations in the Malakand and in Swat, which agree with the shorter reports received at the India Office. It would be impossible for her Majesty's Government to make any statement of the causes which have led to the attack without enquires, which cannot be conducted whilst the fighting continues, and further information must be awaited before the area of the disturbance can be fixed. Dargai, situated somewhat to the south of Malakand Pass, has not been attacked. It may be of interest to your lordships if I read out two telegrams received from India yesterday and to-day. "From Viceroy, July 29, 1897. Malakand—Camp attacked again last night. Casualties: Lieutenant Ford, 31st Bengal Infantry, wounded severely; Lieutenants Maclean, Guides, Swinley, 31st Bengal Infantry, slightly wounded; 2 Sepoys killed, 8 wounded. Enemy's loss not known. They charged up to breastworks, but could not penetrate. Pursuit was not attempted, owing to fatigue of men. Chakdara safe. Dargai has not been attacked. Officers wounded doing well, except Colonel Lamb and Lieutenant Ford, whose condition is serious. In fighting of yesterday, when 24th Bengal Infantry were pressed on flank by enemy, counter attack, led by Lieutenant Climo, drove back large body of enemy with loss of 90. 38th Bengal Infantry and squadron of 11th Bengal Lancers, strength 8 European officers, 12 native officers, 552 rank and file, will probably reach Malakand this evening; 35th Bengal Infantry following. 37th Bengal Infantry ordered Peshawar, 8th Bengal Infantry Nowshera, to replace troops reinforcing Malakand. Regret to say Major Taylor, 45th Bengal Infantry, dead." "From Viceroy, July 30, 1897. Malakand—Total casualties up to July 29, apparently:—Killed: European officers and non-commissioned officers, 3; native ranks, 17; followers, 15. Wounded: European officers, 9; native ranks, 71; followers, 11.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS asked the Secretary of State for India whether he had any further information as to the destruction by the recent earthquake of the property of the Welsh Presbyterian Foreign Mission Society in the Khasia and Jaintia Hills and in Sylhet.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I regret to say that very serious damage has been done in Sylhet; but as regards the particular property mentioned in the question I have as yet received no information.

THE POONA PROSECUTIONS.

Mr. MACNEILL asked the Secretary of State for India whether the charge of sedition on which proceedings, including arrest and refusal of bail, had been instituted by the Indian Government against Gangadhur Tilak was founded on an article so far back as June 15:

And why the prosecution had been deferred till a period when, owing to the prorogation of Parliament, the conduct of these proceedings would be exempted from immediate Parliamentary criticism.

Lord G. Hamilton: I have no information from the Government of India or from that of Bombay as to the date or dates of the article or articles on which this prosecution has been instituted. On questions of this kind the Governments in India must have a free hand, and I do not propose to interfere with them in the exercise of their discretion.

Mr. MacNeill said what he wished to know from the noble lord was whether the Government of India were responsible to the House of Commons or not.

The Speaker: Order, order. That is not a question to be answered.

Mr. MacNeill: Yes, Sir, I know the answer. (Laughter.)

INDIAN COLLIERIES.

Mr. Schwann asked the Secretary of State for India whether the Umaria Colliery, belonging to the Government, had been worked, and the price of coal fixed at so low a rate as to produce, in the year 1895, a profit of only 0·13 per cent. on the capital, and in the year 1896 a loss of Rx. 1,436:

Whether his attention had been drawn to the statement in the published reports (Administration Report, Railways) that the capital outlay on December 31, 1895, was Rx. 1,078,883; that Rx. 88,911 was expended on capital acconnt during 1896, making the total capital outlay on December 31, 1896, Rx. 1,167,774; and that the receipts during the year 1896 were Rx. 379,429, and the expenditure Rx. 380,865, showing a loss of Rx. 1,436:

And whether there were other colliery companies paying royalties to the Government which were deprived of any dividend by their price for coal being forced down by reason of the bounty system adopted by the Indian Government.

Lord G. Hamilton: The figures given in Clauses 1 and 2 of the honourable member's question appear to be correctly cited from the Reports presented to Parliament, with this difference, that the figures for capital expenditure, yearly receipts and expenditure, profit and loss, are stated at ten times the actual amounts, as given in the Reports. I am not aware of any Indian collieries that pay royalty to Government, except those in Assam and Burma, and I do not think the coal of those companies has ever reached, or is likely to reach, the Central India railways, which now consume 70 per cent. of the total output of Umaria coal.

THE "FORWARD" POLICY AND ITS RESULTS.

Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett asked the Secretary of State for India whether he had any information to give the House as to the fighting at Malakand.

Lord George Hamilton: I have received the following telegram: "From Viceroy, July 29, 1897. Camp attacked again last night. Casualties—Lieutenant Ford, 31st Bengal Infantry, severely wounded; Lieutenants Maclean, Guides, Swinley, 31st Bengal Infantry, slightly wounded; two Sepoys killed, eight wounded. Enemy's loss not known. They charged up to breastworks, but could not penetrate. Pursuit was not attempted, owing to fatigue of men. Chakdara safe. Dargai has not been attacked. Officers wounded doing well, except Colonel Lamb and Lieutenant Ford, whose condition is serious." They go on to say that reinforcements would probably reach Malakand yesterday evening; and this evening I received the following telegram: "From Viceroy, July 30, 1897—Malakand. Total casualties up to July 29, apparently: Killed, European officers and non-commissioned officers, three; native ranks, 17; followers, 15. Wounded: European officers, nine; native ranks, 71; followers, 11."

July 31.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Sir W. Wedderburn, addressing the Speaker, said:—Sir, With the permission of the House I desire to make a personal explanation, because by to-day's Indian telegrams I see that Professor Gokhale acknowledges without reservation that he was misled by his correspondents, and that he withdraws the charge against British soldiers engaged in plague operations at Poona. (Hear, hear.) As I was the means of introducing Professor Gokhale, with other Indian witnesses, to members of this House in the conference room, and thus afforded him an opportunity of making these statements, I desire unreservedly to express my deep regret that, directly or indirectly, I should have aided in giving currency to a charge which proves to have been unfounded. (Cheers.)

Sir J. Fergusson: If I am in order, I should like to ask the hon. member whether it is also the case that Professor Gokhale attributes some statements——

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member is not in order in raising a discussion upon a personal explanation.

August 2.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE POONA ARRESTS.

Mr. Davitt asked the Secretary of State for India, could he state how many arrests of British subjects had been made in India recently under the Law of *lettre de cachet*:

Whether the persons thus arrested were to be imprisoned indefinitely without trial:

Whether this system of punishment for alleged political offences was a proceeding sanctioned by any canon of English law; and, if so, would he state what such law was:

And whether any British subject, so arrested and imprisoned in India, had the right of trial before any court of India, or any right of appeal to any tribunal in England.

Lord G. Hamilton: The first question refers to the Bombay regulation of the Act 25 of 1827. There are two arrests under it. As to the second question, I cannot say what may be the intentions now or hereafter of the Indian Government. As to question three, it seems to me to be a matter of opinion, and the hon. member can consult the regulation and form his own opinion. As to question four, there is no appeal.

Mr. MacNeill: Under regulation 25 can they be arrested and kept in prison indefinitely without trial?

Lord G. Hamilton: The Indian Government have powers to detain as long as they think necessary.

Mr. Davitt: May I ask the noble lord whether his sanction was obtained for these arrests before they were made?

Lord G. Hamilton: Yes.

THE "FORWARD" POLICY AND ITS RESULTS.

Mr. Weir asked the Under Secretary of State for War if he would state what rifles were used by the British troops in the fighting at Malakand:

And had the troops any Maxim guns; and, if so, could he state whether they were water-jacketed, and fitted with the new automatic supply cistern.

Lord G. Hamilton: No British troops were engaged at Malakand. The native troops have Martini-Henry rifles.

There are two Maxim guns which are water-jacketed. I have no knowledge of the automatic supply system.

THE "FORWARD" POLICY AND ITS RESULTS.

Colonel Lockwood asked the Secretary of State for India whether he had any news to communicate to the House as to the garrison at Chakdara.

Lord G. Hamilton: I have two telegrams. The first, from the Viceroy at Simla received at the India Office, August 2, 11.47 a.m., is as follows:—

"Malakand.—In continuation of my telegram in the Military Department, dated yesterday. Cavalry reconnaissance with flanking infantry support met with strong opposition, and was obliged to retire. Casualties—Captain G. M. Baldwin, the Corps of Guides, wounded severely; Lieutenant C. V. Keyes, the Corps of Guides, wounded slightly. Native ranks—the Corps of Guides, 11th Bengal Lancers, 12 wounded, three dangerously. Enemy following up attacked north side of camp. General Blood having arrived and assumed command, wires this morning columns under Meiklejohn and Goldney advanced at dawn and attacked enemy on made road and on hills. Attacks brilliantly executed, and, so far as could be seen from Malakand, completely successful. Officers previously wounded doing well, except Lamb and Costello, doing fairly." (Cheers.)

I have a further telegram in these terms: "Chakdara relieved; garrison safe." (Cheers.)

August 5.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE NEW CANTONMENT REGULATIONS.

On the motion of Mr. James Stuart, a Return was granted of Memorials addressed to the Secretary of State for India by the British Committee of the Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice against the new Cantonment Regulations proposed by the Government of India, and by the British Women's Temperance Association against any intervention of the State for the regulation of immorality.

EXCISE REVENUE IN BENGAL.

Mr. Samuel Smith asked the Secretary of State for India whether there were grounds for the belief that there was a tendency to increase the number of outstills in Bengal where they already existed, and whether the introduction of the outstill system in some districts where it did not now exist was also in the contemplation of the Government;

Whether in 18 districts where the outstill system was already in force the annual average number of stills for the five-year period, 1890 to 1895, was 1,286, while the number licensed in 1896 was 1,456, showing an increase of nearly 200;

And, whether the Excise Revenues of Bengal had increased nearly 1,000 per cent. in 60 years.

Lord G. Hamilton: I am not aware of any grounds for the belief that there is a tendency to extend the outstill system in Bengal; the information in my possession points rather in the other direction.

As regards the second part of the hon. member's question, I believe that there are thirty districts in which the outstill system is wholly or partially in force. The annual average of licensed outstill liquor shops in Bengal was 3,441 for the five years 1885-90, and 1,949 for the five years 1890-95.

No fair comparison can be made between the excise revenues of Bengal sixty years ago and those of the present day; but it is certain that on every exciseable article a larger revenue is now paid, and that evasion of duty is much more difficult than in 1837.

THE POONA OUTRAGES.

Mr. Hazell asked the Secretary of State for India whether, having regard to the special circumstances of the case, it would be possible to make an extra allowance to the widow of Lieutenant Ayerst, who was murdered at Poona on June 22 last.

Lord G. Hamilton: In cases of this kind it is usual to leave the initiative to the Government of India. Any recommendation which they may make in favour of the widows of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst will receive the careful consideration of the Secretary of State in Council.

THE EXTINCTION OF JHALAWAR.

Mr. Pickersgill asked the Secretary of State for India whether Papers would be presented to Parliament relating to the recent partition of the Jhalawar State, and the annexation of the larger portion of it to the State of Kotah; and whether he would include in those Papers copies of the Despatches of the Government of India initiating those measures, and of the replies of the Secretary of State in Council confirming the annexation, with any dissents in either case;

And whether he would include a copy of the treaty by which Jhalawar was established as a separate State in 1838.

Lord G. Hamilton: My answer to both questions is in the affirmative; but I must await the final report of the Government of India on the arrangements made before I can undertake to lay the papers on the Table.

THE POONA OUTRAGES.
PROFESSOR GOKHALE'S RETRACTATION.

Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree asked the Secretary of State for India whether Mr. Gokhale had withdrawn, by official communication to the Bombay Government, the statements which he made to certain members of this House and to a newspaper reporter last month regarding the alleged atrocities perpetrated by the officers and soldiers engaged in plague relief operations in Poona; and, if so, would he give such communication or the main purport of it to the House.

Lord G. Hamilton: Yes Sir; the Governor of Bombay telegraphed on the August 2 that he had received from Mr. Gokhale the following telegram. The words are: "Have just posted full statement containing explanation, full retractation, and unqualified apology."

I also directed enquiries to be made as to the authenticity of the signatures attached to a large memorial which the hon. baronet the member for Banff introduced to the notice of the House, and upon which it was proposed to move the adjournment of the House. Lord Sandhurst's reply is as follows:

"Deccan Sabha petition. Of the 1,699 signatures, 721 have been examined; of these only 144 could be found, the remaining 577 not being found or traceable, and not known. Of the 144 found, 14 deny their signatures; the rest say they were induced by agents of the Deccan Sabha and the *Dnyan Prakash* newspaper to sign a petition about plague measures, but 50 did not know what they were signing. Different objects held out: more street lamps; for fixing price of grain; against additional taxation; reduction of market rents. Bhide, first signatory, admits he worked with troops from first to last, never missing a day of his turn to accompany search parties, and that he never saw any misconduct. Nawah Abdul Khan says he signed in his private capacity, never having seen memorial, knowing nothing of its contents, and never having seen any misconduct. He has been deposed from place of leader of Muhammadan community, the Muhammadans denying that they have any complaint to make against plague operations."

INDIAN COLLIERIES.

Mr. Henry Kimber asked the Secretary of State for India whether he was correctly reported to have stated, in answer to a question on the July 30, that no royalties were paid by Indian Collieries to the Government, except in Assam and Burma.

Lord G. Hamilton: I regret that by an oversight my answer was as stated by the honourable member. It should have been stated that the Nerbudda Coal Company pays a royalty to Government, and its coal may compete with the Umaria coal. The directors of that Company have represented to me that such competition is not fair to them, and I am now in correspondence with them on the subject.

ENTERIC FEVER AT AGRA.

Sir J. Fergusson (on behalf of Colonel Kenyon-Slaney) asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether in the 2nd Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment, stationed at Agra, there were, between 23rd February and 27th June, 1897, 77 admissions into hospital from enteric fever, resulting in the deaths of 1 officer and 18 non-commissioned officers and men; whether he could state how many cases of enteric fever were developed in the military hospital by men under treatment for venereal and other diseases; and whether he would institute an inquiry into the causes of this outbreak, and into the water supply.

Mr. Brodrick: The returns received from Agra do not extend beyond April 30th. During the months of February, March, and April there appear to have been 63 admissions from the 2nd battalion York and Lancaster Regiment for enteric fever and 12 deaths, the great outbreak having occurred in April. There are no returns to show how many cases were developed in hospital in men suffering from other diseases. A special investigation was immediately instituted with the result that the water supplied by the municipal authorities has been found to be infected with the enteric microbe. Every possible precaution has been taken; and it was stated in the report for April that the epidemic seemed to be abating.

THE INDIAN BUDGET.

THE USUAL OFFICIAL OPTIMISM.

LORD G. HAMILTON ON "METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENA" AND "PROBLEMS AHEAD."

On the motion to go into Committee on the East India Revenue Accounts,

Lord George Hamilton rose to make the annual statement as to the finances of India. He said: I think it would be for the convenience of the House that I should make my statement on the motion that you, Sir, leave the Chair. As

there are a number of motions on the Paper, some of them important, it is clear it would be better that the House should have an authoritative statement on the finances rather than that we should occupy the earlier hours of the sitting discussing matters which, however important they may be, are scarcely relevant to my statement. When last year I had the honour of making the annual Indian financial statement in this House, I was able to associate it with a series of very satisfactory results. For the first time for some years the Secretary of State was able to point to realised surpluses of income over expenditure for the first two of the three years he was dealing with, and as regards the third year there was a reasonable prospect of the outcome of that year becoming even more satisfactory than the ascertained results of the two preceding years. I was also able to show that Indian credit had never before been so high, and that we proposed to associate with this increased power of borrowing an enlarged scheme of reproductive public works. A statement such as I was then able to make would, if it had come from the mouth of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have been an almost certain herald of some remission of taxation in the forthcoming financial year. I warned the public against putting any such optimistic interpretation upon my speech. I pointed out that the sources of taxation in India were few, and could not be increased; that, independent of the ordinary emergencies to which all civilised governments may be subject, there were in India special dangers and difficulties which might, almost without warning, cause a sudden and heavy drain upon her treasuries. I, therefore, indicated that whilst some remission of existing taxation might be possible, if no untoward events intervened, no permanent remission of any individual tax would be safe or desirable. All subsequent speakers, with scarcely an exception, accepted these views. At the time I spoke I had just received an unpleasant intimation from India that the meteorological phenomena of 1897 curiously resembled those of the great famine year of 1877-78, and, although I did not feel justified in giving publicly substance to these shadowy predictions, they were present in my mind during the whole of that debate. Unfortunately, they have been more than verified. The famine of 1896-97 has affected a larger area, and scarcity has been felt by a larger proportion of the population, than in any similar visitation of which we have record in this century. But it did not come alone. Plague with all its attendant horrors and miseries fastened on the west coast of India, and thus the Government have had to deal simultaneously with two of the most terrible scourges that can assail humanity. It is difficult to dissociate the losses caused by these two separate visitations, so as to accurately apportion to each the loss entailed by it upon the Exchequer. Putting on one side the loss of life, the misery, and the suffering inflicted upon the community, as well as their personal pecuniary losses, we calculate the actual financial loss caused by these disasters to the Government Treasury alone for the two years 1896-97 and 1897-98 at about Rx.12,000,000. Great as this sum is, it excludes all advances, amounting to about Rx. 2,000,000, which we believe will be recoverable. Neither does it include any estimate of the loss and ruin caused by the earthquake in Bengal and Assam, as that calamity has occurred so recently and has affected so large a territory that we have no reliable estimate of the approximate damage. Therefore in the statements of revenue and expenditure with which I am about to deal, covering three years' finance, the House must remember that, in addition to frontier war expenditure, famine and plague have placed a drain of no less than 12 crores upon the Indian Exchequer, and that the whole of this loss has been met out of Indian treasuries within the space of two years, and without the imposition of any additional taxation. The closed amounts of 1895-96 can be dismissed in a few sentences; they were not affected by plague or famine, but they do include the whole cost of the Chitral campaign — namely, Rx. 1,670,000. Notwithstanding this war expenditure, they give a realised surplus of Rx. 1,533,998. This result is all the more remarkable inasmuch as, in addition to the Chitral expenditure, in the course of the year a considerable sum was added to famine insurance, a remission of taxation occurred, and a much larger grant was made for provincial purposes to the local governments than was budgeted for originally. These sums amounted in the aggregate to about Rx. 1,200,000, making, with the Chitral expenditure, a sum of about Rx. 2,870,000, of which Rx. 2,725,000 was unprovided for in the original estimates of expenditure, and had to be added to them. Yet, notwithstanding these extra charges, the closed accounts of the year showed a surplus of Rx. 1,534,000 as against a Budget Estimate of Rx. 46,000. I mention these facts to show that there is in our Indian system of finance considerable elasticity, more than sufficient to meet the growth of ordinary wants, and it is due to the steady enhancement of almost every branch of revenue that we are able to show in a triennial period such as that with which I am dealing, deficits very much less than the extraordinary expenditure thrust upon us. I now come to the first of the famine years, to the revised accounts for the year 1896-97. Originally the Indian Government Budget showed revenue to the amount of Rx. 61,053,200, and expenditure Rx. 60,590,100, showing a surplus of Rx. 463,100; but the revised estimate, including famine expenditure, was not so satisfactory. The revenue is reduced to Rx. 58,034,200, and the expenditure to Rx. 60,021,100, showing a deficit of Rx. 1,986,900. Analysing these figures, we find that the revenue has increased by Rx. 3,019,000, and that the expenditure is less by Rx. 569,000; so that the position is worse by Rx. 2,450,000, there being an estimated deficit of Rx. 1,986,900 in place of the original estimated surplus of Rx. 463,100. Now, this change is entirely brought about by the famine, through which, as compared with a normal condition of affairs, the finances suffered by loss of revenue alone Rx. 3,029,500, and the increase of expenditure in consequence of the famine was also upwards of three millions—Rx. 3,045,600. Taking these two together, we have a total deterioration of Rx. 6,075,100. Now, as those who study Indian finance are aware, a certain portion of the famine expenditure falls upon the provincial funds, and the provincial and local balances bear Rx. 574,700 of this expenditure, while there is withdrawn from the Grant for Protection Works Rx. 476,300. Therefore, the net cost imposed upon the Indian Government this year in consequence of the famine is Rx. 5,024,100 in excess of the preceding year. But there were also other alterations in the revenue which are worth notice. There was a reduction of the opium revenue of Rx. 420,100; and this, added to the Imperial loss under famine, gives a total deterioration of Rx. 5,444,200. Towards meeting this there are certain improvements. In exchange (the rate for the year having proved to be 14·454d., or nearly 1s. 2½d. per rupee, against the Budget Estimate of 1s. 1¾d.) there was a benefit on the expenditure side of the account of Rx. 1,728,600. Then, independent of exchange, famine, and opium, there was a reduction of net expenditure of Rx. 354,700, bringing the total to Rx. 1,143,500, and there was also an increase of revenue to the amount of Rx. 354,700, bringing the total improvements to Rx. 1,498,200. Putting this with the gain on exchange, but deducting Rx. 232,600 of the increased Revenue credited to Provincial Governments, we get an improvement of Rx. 2,994,200, which, deducting from it the extra cost entailed by the famine and the loss on opium, makes the position worse by Rx. 2,450,000. Thus, a surplus of Rx. 463,103 is converted into a deficit of Rx. 1,986,900. Since these figures were prepared, I have received further information as to the accounts, which have now been closed. They are somewhat better. The actual deficit for 1896-97 is expected to be Rx. 1,593,500, which is less by Rx. 393,400 than previously stated. Let me sum up these figures. They are rather complicated, but I hope the House will be able to follow me. (Hear, hear.) The upshot of the whole transaction is this – that for this year the famine imposed upon India an extra charge of Rx. 5,962,600. The actual deficit was Rx. 1,593,500. Therefore, the excess of loss caused by the famine over deficit is Rx. 4,639,100. This second year, therefore, again exhibits the same phenomenon as the preceding year—a large surplus over ordinary expenditure, endorsing the results of the preceding year, and showing there is a large margin of income over ordinary expenditure to meet the special charges to which a country like India is ever subject. I shall not compare the Budget Estimate of this year with the Budget Estimate of last year, which is the usual practice, for such a comparison would be a mere waste of time. The Budget of last year was prepared before the likelihood of a famine was known, and famine has entirely upset the Budget calculations. I take, therefore, the revised Estimates of 1896-97, which are famine estimates, and compare them with the Budget Estimates of 1897-98, which are similarly disorganised. The revenue this year is taken at Rx. 59,629,700, and the expenditure is taken at Rx. 62,093,700. The deficit is thus Rx. 2,464,000, or Rx. 477,100 more than last year. This increase in the deficit is mainly due to the increase in the expenditure on famine relief outweighing the

augmentation hoped for in the revenue. The revenue, taking the land tax, the salt tax, and various other things, is increased by Rx. 2,485,300. On the other hand, there are certain deductions to be made on account of a falling off from other sources of revenue, with the details of which I will not trouble the House, amounting to Rx. 889,800. Therefore the net revenue is better by Rx. 1,595,500. The increase in expenditure on the famine account is Rx. 1,653,300; and other charges are slightly in excess of last year by the sum of Rx. 419,300, giving a total increase over last year's estimate of Rx. 2,072,600. Therefore, summing up the three years, we have a surplus in the first of Rx. 1,534,000, a deficit in the second of Rx.1,593,000, and an estimated deficit in the third of Rx. 2,464,000, making a total excess of expenditure over income for the three years of Rx.2,523,000. Since then I have learnt by telegraph that the charges for this year will be increased by Rx.400,000 for famine charges, the railway loan by Rx.150,000, that the discount on the sterling loan is Rx.180,000, that the Tochi expedition is estimated to cost Rx.330,000, and that the cost of the Malakand expeditionary force will be Rx.400,000, making a total of Rx. 1,460,000. Against this may be put a rise in exchange and more promising harvest prospects, so that I am hopeful that at the close of the year's account the ultimate deficiency will not be much in excess of that budgeted for at the beginning of the year. In order to meet the extraordinary expenditure of the famine and to carry out the railway programme, it was estimated in the Budget that a loan of four crores at 3 per cent. would be raised in India, and loans to the extent of £4,500,000 would be raised in this country. We have been compelled somewhat to alter this proportion; three crores only will be raised in India at 3½ per cent., in place of the four at 3 per cent., and the loans in this country will be raised *pro tanto* to make good the difference. Before I part with the revenue and expenditure for 1897-98, there is an item on each side to which I should like to call attention. The opium revenue this year is taken at a less figure than in any preceding Budget statement. There were many of us who, although we had no objection, from a moral point of view, to the Indian Government deriving a certain portion of its income from opium, yet felt, considering how precarious is the nature of that revenue, that it formed too large a percentage of the total net revenue of India. It has greatly fallen of recent years. In 1883-84 it formed 19 per cent. of the total net revenue of India, and this year it only represents 5 per cent. It is, therefore, satisfactory to note that, whilst Indian revenue generally is increasing, this precarious source of income is forming a less proportion of the permanent income upon which the Indian Government can rely. (Hear, hear.) The army expenditure for this year—that is, independent of the expeditionary forces in the Tochi Valley and the Malakand—was Rx. 100,000 less than in the preceding year. It is frequently assumed that our army has attained undue dimensions, and that the country is taxed unreasonably for gigantic military establishments. We have in India some 75,000 European troops and 140,000 native troops. These in the aggregate stand to the civil population in the proportion of 11 to every 10,000, and the proportion will be lower if we include the population of the Native States. In the Russian territory of Asia their army stands in the proportion to the civil population of 137 to 10,000, or 12 times higher than the proportion the Indian army bears to the civil population. France maintains 894 and Germany 662 soldiers to every 10,000 of the civil population, and in this country we maintain 147 soldiers to the same proportion of the civil population. It is clear, therefore, that, looking at the population and the area of territory in which they have to work, the army is extremely small. It should be remembered that the only security that India has for the continued preservation of peace and tranquillity is the knowledge that there is one paramount Power possessing sufficient power to suppress all disorderly elements. This army is not an element of aggression or of menace to others, but it is the guardian of the industry and well-being of the peaceful masses, and protects them from the spoliation and exaction to which, for centuries previous to the advent of our rule in India, they were ever subject. But if our army is small it is very efficient. It is admitted on all hands that our European regiments in India have attained a very high standard of efficiency, and many of the native regiments are little behind them. We had a specimen of the native forces in the delegation of officers who came over as an escort to the Queen at her Jubilee. (Hear, hear.) They met with an enthusiastic reception, which they most heartily appreciated, as was shown by the thanks which, through me as Secretary of State, they returned to the people of England for their kindness and hospitality. In the short period that has elapsed since then the native army has twice been tried—in the Tochi Valley and at the Malakand Kotal, where they were the only troops engaged. On both occasions they showed an admirable spirit and unflinching loyalty. It must be gratifying to the people of this country to know that their reception of these gallant representatives of the Indian army was in no sense misjudged, and that, even in the short interval since the Jubilee, that army has given fresh proof of its loyalty and heroism. (Hear, hear.) It will doubtless be suggested that the recent fighting that has occurred in these two places has proved the unwisdom of the policy of frontier extension. It is no doubt inconvenient that the cost of two expeditionary forces should have to be defrayed in this year of exceptional financial difficulty; but no one expected, when we extended our sphere of influence over these territories, that the tribes would at once abandon their predatory and pugnacious habits. There is only one method by which the tribes along our Indian frontier can be permanently weaned from their old malpractices, and that is to so improve their material condition that they will not risk the advantages they have thus gained for the mere fun of fighting. The opening and making of the road from the Malakand to Chitral has greatly improved the material prosperity of all in the valley, and, although the inhabitants of that district may be subject to sudden outbreaks of fanatical zeal, I am confident that, under the steady pressure of improved circumstances, they will follow the example of the other tribes, with whom we have had to deal similarly, and gradually become friendly and well-to-do neighbours. During the last 20 years the system of financial decentralisation has made great strides in India, and every five years a revision takes place in the financial relations between the central and the provincial Governments. This quinquennial alteration took place in the year 1897, and as the division and of expenditure and income arrived at between the two authorities has excited much local interest and criticism, I will in a few sentences explain the principles of the system. By far the greater part of the revenue is collected by the officers of the Provincial Governments, and a very large portion of the civil expenditure is under their control. It is, therefore, highly desirable that the Provincial Governments should have a direct interest in the effective collection of the one and in the economical administration of the other. With this view the Government of India enters into agreements with the Provincial Governments, usually for five years at a time, under which the latter receive certain proportions of the main sources of revenue, together with nearly all the departmental receipts, and bear the responsibility of the whole or a fixed proportion of the charges under most of the heads. The probable position of the several local governments is then carefully examined, and a specific sum in each case (adjusted for convenience under the head of land revenue) is either added to or deducted from the amount of the provincial revenues. In the quinquennial settlements made with the Provincial Governments in 1892 they were allowed as the net amount of expenditure Rx. 13,066,500. In the new settlements this is raised to Rx. 14,355,900, excluding Upper Burma, which is now for the first time provincialised. Including it, the total is Rx. 15,628,900. The expenditure being thus determined, revenue is assigned to each local government accordingly. But the circumstances of the several Provinces have further to be considered, with the view of seeing whether on the one hand, owing to the state of their balances, it is necessary to give them an addition to their revenue or a special grant at the commencement of a new settlement; or whether, on the other hand, their finances admit of the withdrawal of some part of the increase that has occurred under the provincialised heads of revenue, so as to give a share of the improvement to the general finances. In the former class on this occasion comes the Central Provinces, Lower Burma, Assam, the Punjab, and the North-Western Provinces; from none of these is money withdrawn, and in some cases additional grants are made in order to replenish the balance. In the more flourishing provinces, however, of Bengal, Madras and Bombay the Government of India have claimed some part of the increase, though there is much dispute both as to the amount remaining for the provincial revenues and as to its adequacy. Around the latter point a great controversy has arisen. These provinces complain

bitterly of the check to progress if they are not allowed the full amount to which their revenue in the previous period had attained, and Sir Alexander Mackenzie in the Viceroy's Council last year, and Sir Arthur Havelock in his own council this year, have vigorously protested against the proportions of the revenues assigned. On the other hand, Sir James Westland and the Viceroy strongly maintain the right of the Provincial Government, from the commencement of the provincial system, to share, when each five years' agreement has expired, in the growth of the revenue which had been assigned to the local governments for that period, and they point out that only by such control can any chance arise of lightening the taxpayers' burdens. The controversy raised by these settlements is very interesting, for it goes to the very root of financial devolution and the respective responsibilities and the relative importance of the work done by the two contracting parties. Upon the Imperial Government rests the primary duty of maintaining order internally and of protecting the frontiers; of the risk of war, famine, exchange, and sudden emergencies; of the responsibility of maintaining not only national solvency, but also the solvency of the Provincial Governments. It is, moreover, their business, whenever they can, to remit or abolish taxation. On the Provincial Governments, on the other hand rests, the duty of developing the resources of their respective provinces, and by so developing them to add to the general prosperity, comfort and taxable power of the community at large. The number of objects associated with these purposes is ever increasing, and the expenditure involved by them ever growing. In this country we know how local expenditure has increased much more rapidly than Imperial expenditure; and this is not due to inherent extravagance of the bodies controlling this expenditure, but to the inevitable result that, as civilisation and prosperity increase, so the functions of local authorities are raised to a higher standard of duty and ambition. (Hear, hear.) In this country, however, the great bulk, if not the whole, of this expenditure falls directly upon the ratepayers, and this acts as a natural check upon undue development of expenditure; but if the great bulk of the expenditure fell, not upon local rates, but upon portions of Imperial revenues, the House will easily understand that local wants and local expenditure would develop with extraordinary rapidity. It is most desirable to extend financial decentralisation in India, and it is only by constant development of this principle that the ever-increasing burden of administration in India can be adequately met. But, on the other hand, a margin, and a large margin, of revenue must be left to the Imperial Government to meet emergencies and to reduce taxation. The present scheme is not yet settled, and still is under the consideration of the Government. I fully admit the force of the objections urged against it by the Provincial Governments but, on the other hand, I have seen no scheme, nor has any been suggested to me, which is less free from objection. I hope, however, that we may be able, by carefully considering both sides of this problem, to arrive at some conclusion which will prevent in future the feeling of irritation and annoyance which undoubtedly at the present moment is experienced by several of the Provincial Administrations. (Hear, hear.) I now turn to the three great calamities which have visited India during the last 12 months—earthquake, plague, and famine. The effects of the earthquake were entirely confined to the provinces of Bengal and Assam. It is now clear that the loss of life was much exaggerated, and that it should be numbered by hundreds rather than by the thousands whom it was originally stated had perished in this catastrophe. (Hear, hear.) The loss of property, however, is great in many parts of the country. All masonry buildings have been destroyed, and bridges, railways, and roads have been greatly damaged; but the loss has mainly fallen on the well-to-do. It is the planters and manufacturers and the employers of labour who have lost heavily. The mat huts of the natives can be easily restored, and the demand for labour is great, and wages are high; so much is this the case that the Commissioner of Assam informed the Viceroy that there was no need of a relief fund for the benefit of this province. Still, I fear that this disaster will have a pernicious and deterrent effect upon the subsequent investment of capital in this part of India, and a considerable check will be given to the development of this rich but sparsely inhabited province. The outbreak of plague in Western India in one sense caused even greater apprehension to the authorities than the knowledge that scarcity and famine would attack a large area of territory. It is true that scarcity and famine might and did afflict a very much larger proportion of the population, and caused much more suffering and distress; but the methods by which it could be met were known and were appreciated, and the Government could rely upon hearty co-operation from every section of the community in their endeavours to mitigate the evil. But these conditions were all reversed when it became necessary to deal with plague. The only methods by which its growth could be arrested were repugnant to the instincts, customs, and usages of the great mass of the native population, and they interfered with the privacy of their home life. At the outset of plague, Government had to consider the only two alternative courses which were open to them. They might have allowed the plague to run its course, and thus avoided all the unpopularity and disturbance which might be provoked by any attempt to stamp it out. But if they had adopted this course, not only would it have been a cowardly derogation of duty, but it might and probably would have involved the industrial and economic ruin of India. It is impossible to exaggerate the intensity of the alarm caused everywhere by a knowledge of the outbreak of this disease. If plague had once been allowed to fasten upon India, looking at the area of its territory and the vastness of its population, it would have been many years before this pestilence could have been extirpated. During the whole of that period India would have been boycotted by the world. The danger ahead in India in my judgment is not insufficiency of food, but insufficiency of employment for her rapidly-increasing millions. Industries are gradually springing up, and an exporting trade is slowly developing of inestimable benefit in giving employment of a varied character. The establishment of plague in India would have not only caused terrible mortality and great distress in the districts which it visited, but it would have deprived many millions of persons outside these districts of the employment which they now obtain. The Government, therefore, had no choice but to do their best to stamp out the plague—(cheers)—and the only method by which plague can be so eradicated, is by the segregation of the sick and house-to-house visitation. Both these principles came into contact with the hereditary customs and traditions of Oriental life. The people were at first alarmed, but the patience and kindness shown by the officers in charge of these operations soon reassured them—(hear, hear)—and no serious difficulty occurred anywhere in the West of India except at Poona. In Poona, unfortunately there is a clique of some of the descendants of those who, at the commencement of this century, controlled a considerable portion of India. They have ever been hostile to British rule, and they have never lost any opportunity of stirring up discontent and disaffection against the authorities. They promptly availed themselves of this occasion, and, by gross and wilful distortion of the acts of the officers of the search party employed at Poona, they contrived to produce the feeling which resulted in the murder of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst. Both these officers were done to death by the spread of wilful and malicious falsehoods. I trust that there will be no recrudescence of this pestilence in the ensuing autumn. The Government will show every respect for the feelings, the traditions, and even the prejudices of the native community in any further action they may take for the suppression of plague. Any improper acts of those under its authority will be promptly punished; but if, on behalf of the Indian Government, I enter into this undertaking, I think I have a right to ask for some reciprocity. (Hear, hear.) India is the land of exaggeration, of romance, and of imagination. Ordinary prosaic acts are there expanded by high-flown exaggerated language to proportions which, to our common-place minds, seem almost incredible. I am sure I am not asking too much of those who take an interest in the proceedings of the Government of India to be most careful before they give currency to the statements reflecting upon the action of the officers associated with the discharge of plague duties, to investigate the sources of their information, and to believe no statements made to them until they are satisfied that they rest on indisputable authority. (Hear, hear.) The dimensions of the late famine and scarcity were considerably greater than that which occurred twenty years ago in 1877-78, and a comparison between the two may be interesting. The area of square miles affected by famine in 1877 was 257,000; in 1897, 322,000. The population of the famine area in the first period was 58,000,000; the population this

year 68,000,000; and the highest number receiving relief at one time in 1877 was 3,178,000; in 1897, 4,224,000. There is a marked difference in the characteristics of the two famines. In 1877 there were two separate and distinct famine districts, one in Northern India and one in Southern India. The distress extended over a period of eighteen months, but the culmination of distress in Southern India was many months in advance of the period at which distress attained its height in Northern India. There was an intense pressure from an absence of food in both districts, caused by an almost complete failure of the crops; but in districts outside the crops were good, and surpluses of food for the districts were, to a large extent, available. The peculiarity of the famine of last year was an almost universal shortness of rain. Crops in only a few districts—Bundelcund and the Central Provinces—were a complete failure, but almost everywhere they were a partial failure. British India is divided into 250 administrative districts. No less than 115 of these districts were classified as famine districts, although no district comes into that category unless it has upwards of 10,000 persons upon relief works. Of the districts outside, few, except those in Burma, had any large spare surplus of food; and thus the usual experience of famine administration was reversed. There was a great falling off in the railway receipts, instead of the increase which in previous famines was associated with the carriage of food by railway. Under conditions such as these, it would have been assumed that great imports of food from abroad would have come into India, that a very high death-rate would have prevailed in the districts where great famine relief works were instituted, and that it would have been possible to obtain an unlimited quantity of labour of low grade. Such anticipations, however, were not fulfilled. High prices, according to the Indian standard, prevailed over an enormous area, but they were not relatively high when compared by the standard of prices in other countries. At the commencement of the scarcity a large shipment of wheat from America arrived in Calcutta and Bombay. Every sale connected with this in India was made at a loss, and ultimately a very large proportion of it was sent back to this country, where it obtained a higher price and a better market. And, as a matter of fact, prices in India, even at the worst period of the famine, were too low to encourage imports of food from outside. As to the death rate, in 1877 it was terribly high; but this year, although great distress and suffering and a high death rate prevailed in the North-West Provinces and the Central Provinces, the death rate in the famine districts of Bengal, Madras, and the Punjab was normal, and even in those districts where the death rate was high, it was almost entirely due to the reluctance of the people to come in until too late, or to constant and severe outbreaks of cholera. As to the condition of the labouring masses, the Government railway programme was greatly enlarged last year, and I hear from all sides that there has been during the past autumn in India a greater difficulty in getting the requisite amount of labour for these works than existed in the preceding years. The explanation of this apparent anomaly lies in the immense improvement which has taken place in working the system of famine relief. A subsistence allowance was given to every man and to every member of his family who applied for relief, and this allowance in the aggregate not infrequently exceeded the remuneration which the man alone from his labour could obtain from ordinary employment. No praise can be too high for the splendid work of the local officers in combating famine. It is a splendid record of administrative philanthropy, and all noted with pleasure the exceptional honour which Her Majesty was pleased to bestow on Sir Antony MacDonnell, on whom fell heavier labours and greater responsibility than on any other official superintending famine operations. One illustration of the excellent management and organisation, is that, although there were at one time more than one million of persons receiving relief, or in relief camps, in the North-West Provinces, Sir Antony Macdonnell so employed the people themselves in maintaining order, that it was not necessary to increase the ordinary police force of the North-West by the addition of a single constable. The appeal made at the commencement of the year for subscriptions in Great Britain and the rest of the Empire, met with a response of extraordinary generosity. The total amount subscribed in Great Britain, India, and elsewhere, amounted to the largest sum ever collected in connexion with any Indian object. Some valuable reports will be published giving details of the administration and distribution of this fund. These reports, and those emanating from the officials in charge of relief, will, no doubt, offer many excellent suggestions, and I have little doubt that out of the experience of the present year such an improvement will be made in the already effective famine code as will make its administration in any future famine as great an improvement upon the work of this year as this year's work was upon the administration of 20 years back. But in connexion with famine and plague administration there is one fact to which I feel bound to call prominent attention. It is only in times of emergency and difficulty that it is possible to test the reserve latent strength in any given executive system of administration. It was soon found that the pivot upon which everything depended in any large administrative district was the European officer. Wherever that element was absent it had to be supplied, thus confirming the almost universal experience of preceding emergencies, which show that a mere capacity for passing a competitive examination cannot compensate for those qualities which are inherent in, or are obtained from, race, training, or instinct. It has been urged by some that the increased area affected by famine this year was due to the increased poverty of the community, and that although relief administration had greatly improved upon the system in force 20 years ago, the people themselves, so far as their powers of resistance are concerned, would have stood this test better 20 years back; and it is further contended that the scarcity of food this year in India is due to the constant and ever-increasing amount of exports from India. I venture to point out that all evidence tends in the opposite direction. It is quite true that the exports of India have very largely increased in the last 20 years; but if I take the average exports of the three years preceding the famine of 1877-78, and of the three years preceding the famine of last year, I find these results: The exports of food other than rice have only increased to a small amount; but the non-eatable exports during that period have increased from Rx. 37,000,000 to Rx. 75,700,000, and this increase is almost entirely in tea, jute, cotton, oil-seeds, indigo, and other non-eatable exports. Moreover, in the interval between the two famines, India has imported and retained no less than Rx. 208,000,000 of gold and silver. The maximum number of persons upon relief at any one time was 4,200,000 persons—a very large number, but not very large in proportion to the population of 250,000,000. (Hear, hear.) The number of persons in this country who are permanently in receipt of poor relief is proportionately much greater than the maximum number on relief works during the worst period of the late famine in India. (Hear, hear.) I hear from all the officers who were connected with famine administration that they noted with surprise the manner in which the mass of the community withstood the hard times. At the same time I readily admit that the advance in the material prosperity of the individual is checked by the enormous aggregate increase of the population. It is estimated that the increase in India of population is above 2,000,000 a year. India is almost a purely agricultural country, and a cardinal feature in our policy should be to multiply and vary industrial occupations, and render this ever-increasing population less dependent upon the vagaries of the rainfall of one year. Now various suggestions from high authorities have been recently made for the attainment of this object. It is suggested that we should largely alter the system of land tenure, with a view of increasing the period of settlement or of substituting fixity of tenure for the shorter periods now in force. Within the famine area of last year is comprised every conceivable form of land tenure from the zemindaree settlement of Bengal to the ryotwaree settlement of Bombay and Madras; and from enquiries made it is clear that no one particular form of settlement was more effective than another in enabling the people to withstand the pressure of high prices. In 1874 the permanently settled districts of Chumparum and Sarum suffered more severely and had many more people on relief than the neighbouring temporarily settled district of Goruckpore. In the present famine the temporarily settled district of Goruckpore had 30,000 people, or 1 per cent. of its population, on relief, while Sarum had 180,000, or 10 per cent. of its population, on relief. Again, going South I find that Ganjam, a permanently settled district of Madras, has suffered more severely and more often from famine than any of the temporarily settled districts of that Presidency. At the present time Ganjam has 66,000 people, or 3 per cent. of its population, on relief, whilst the adjoining

temporary settlement of Pooree has only 5,000, or ½ per cent. of its population, upon relief. I do not contend that the permanently settled districts, as such, suffer more severely in famine than temporarily settled districts; but this instance and many others might be given to support the view that the permanence of land revenue demand does not enable the people to endure the pressure of famine more easily than the inhabitants of temporarily settled districts. It is next suggested to us that we should embark on a large irrigation policy, and I received a large number of requests from members of Parliament to at once sanction the outlay. Twenty years ago a Committee of this House, of which I was chairman, made a most exhaustive enquiry as to how far irrigation works of great magnitude could be usefully extended in India. Upon that Committee were Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Childers, Sir George Campbell, Mr. John Cross, Mr. Grant Duff, Mr. Mulholland, and Mr. Edward Stanhope, and we were unanimous in the conclusions at which we arrived. Agriculture in certain parts of India is impossible without irrigation. In all such districts irrigation, if it be associated with a constant supply of water, is an enormous benefit, and this is shown by the very large returns which canals in the Punjab and Sindh give on their original outlay. There are other districts, such as the North-West Provinces, in which may be found large tracts which can be very beneficially irrigated; but no irrigation has paid its expenses in Lower Bengal or Orissa, and in the greater part of Bombay and Bengal the lack of rain and the physical configuration of the country have prevented irrigation works of great magnitude. The Indian Government are now spending annually Rx. 750,000 upon great irrigation works, and the local governments have an absolutely free hand, so far as their revenues are concerned, in promoting small works of irrigation; and every engineer who has had great practical experience of irrigation confirms the view, taken by this Committee some 20 years ago, that the localities or area in which great new irrigation works can be undertaken with advantage is becoming exhausted, and it will be a waste of ways and means to embark in anything like the wholesale expenditure which after every famine we find pressed upon us. On the other hand, the extension of railroads, wherever undertaken after proper surveys, have been of great benefit not only to the districts through which they run, but to the community at large. They facilitate migration, they greatly increase the area of cultivation, they develop the mineral wealth of the country, and open up new industries. They are a most effective preventive of death from starvation by their carrying power in time of famine and distress, and in years of prosperity they are the most reliable instrument for the augmentation and distribution of wealth, and, so far as the recuperative powers of the mass of the people are concerned, they are the readiest agency the Government can employ. Last year I announced to the House that we proposed to largely increase the railway programme of expenditure for the next three years, and during that period there were to be constructed by the State about 5,000 miles, costing Rx. 29,665,000 and by private companies 2,626 miles, costing Rx. 16,189,000, making an aggregate of 7,681 miles and Rx. 45,854,000 of expenditure. After consultation with the Viceroy, we have determined to adhere, as far as we possibly can, to this increaed outlay—(hear, hear)—though it may be necessary for the present year to reduce our proposed expenditure by one crore; but I believe, for the reasons I have already stated, that the prosecution of this policy will be a most effective famine preventive instrument, and one which should be vigorously pushed through, even although it may occasion for the moment some financial inconvenience. (Hear, hear.) The year of 1897 will long be notable for the continuous series of misfortune and difficulty which it has presented to India. In no year since the transfer of the government of India to the Crown have there been so many troubles packed so closely together in so short a time. In combating these difficulties the brunt of the responsibility and action has fallen upon the Viceroy. (Hear, hear.) Lord Elgin has not the advantage, which several of his predecessors enjoyed, of being well-known to the British public by prominent services in other capacities before he became Viceroy. All who know him or have conducted business with him know that he is a man of great capacity and high courage and, in addition, possesses to a pre-eminent degree the advantage of a judicial and well-balanced mind. (Cheers.) He has faced his difficulties with sound judgment, with unfailing courage, and with unbroken success. (Hear, hear.) He and his Council have been ably supported by the Governors of the various Presidencies and provinces; and the civil and military services have nobly responded to the heavy additional duties placed upon them. The mistakes made have been few, and where made have been promptly remedied and not repeated. When, in the limited tenure of office of a Viceroy or Governor, difficulties of long growth come to a head through their own natural development nothing can be more unfair than to attribute blame to the official who, by the accident of the moment, has to deal with the outcome of the past. (Hear, hear.) It is 40 years since the administration of India passed to the direct control of the Crown, and the retrospect of work accomplished in that time is, on the whole, pleasant and gratifying. We have dealt most successfully with the difficulties we then inherited, and the India of to-day, compared with the India of 40 years back, has made enormous strides of advance in all the outward essentials of Western civilization. The troubles ahead are not in what we inherited, but in what we of our own free will have created. Under the ægis of peace and order the population is increasing with unprecedented rapidity. Can we open out for this annual host of new mouths fresh avenues of employment and self-support? Whilst we have protected the physique we have also endeavoured to cultivate the intellect of India. An elaborate system of education has been established, culminating in Universities through which thousands of young natives yearly obtain degrees in philosophy and literature, but without any subsequent prospect of livelihood, save at the Bar or in connection with the Press. We have established codes of law and procedure far simpler and more expeditious than those in force in this country, and under their influence India is rapidly becoming the most litigious community in the world. Is it impossible to so alter the current and tendency of the education we give as to associate it with objects of a practical and technical character, by which India's latent resources might be developed, her industries multiplied, and her productive power extended? Can we not make it the ambition of the rising generation to so educate themselves as to be able to do something to benefit the community to which they belong, rather than devote most of their energy to abuse of the Government which has educated and is protecting them? These are some of the problems ahead of us, and, though the year of 1897 may in some senses be looked upon as a year of misfortune, it will not be without its salutary lessons if it teaches us to consider and grapple with these subjects in no spirit of reaction or haste, but with the sole consideration as to what India's true interests demand and what the overwhelming mass of the people want. (Cheers.)

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL'S AMENDMENT.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL rose to move as an amendment: "That this House views with grave disapproval the fact that famine, plague, and pestilence in India have been seized by the Indian Government for an attack on the freedom of the Press in India and for the revival of the system of arrest of British subjects in India under the law of *lettre de cachet*, and the indefinite imprisonment without trial of persons thus arrested; and desires to place on record its conviction that the only safe foundation for government in India is to be sought in the extension to British subjects in India of the full privileges of the British Constitution." He wished to bring home to members of the House and to the people of Great Britain that the fortunes and lives of two hundred and fifty millions of human beings—the vast population of India—had been committed to their charge. From that trust England could not shrink. England had destroyed in India every form of government but her own. She had cast the thrones and government of native Princes down to the ground. She was bound at least to extend justice and mercy to the millions thus brought under her sway. His complaint was that they had delegated that government to agents from whom they sought no account. He would not seek to account for a fact which was patent, that the English people viewed Indian matters with a languid interest. In a former generation India was only known to this country through the medium of the adventurers laden with the spoils of Hindustan, who appeared so prominently in public life, and who in the words of Chatham "brought with them not merely Asiatic luxury, but Asiatic principles of government." At present, India was chiefly known to the

community at large not through the medium of millionaires, but rather through the medium of well-to-do officers and retired Indian civilians. The Government of India was left completely in the hands of officials who were in the words of the Indian Secretary to be given "a free hand." Parliamentary criticism of Indian officers was, since the dissolution of the East India Company in 1858, almost a thing of the past. In former times owing to the grant of the East India Company's Charter being limited to a fixed period of years, there was a full investigation at stated intervals by the House of Commons of the affairs of British India and of the condition of its people. Since British India had come under the direct Government of the Crown, however, Parliament seemed to have ignored its responsibility and abandoned the management of Indian affairs to officials with a callousness as much to be deplored as the conduct of an Irish absentee landlord in abandoning his tenants to the tender mercies of a agent. The discussion of Indian affairs in that House was put off to the very last day of the Session, and this circumstance, highly indicative of neglect, was made the subject of a jest, which was, he thought, unworthy of him, by the First Lord of the Treasury, who when he was asked on July 17 when the Indian Budget would come on for discussion said: "I shall carefully follow precedent in this matter. (Laughter.) I think there is no chance of our being able to take it until we reach the last week of the Session." When the Indian Budget did come on, discussions had as a rule been, in the main, confined to friendly conversations, in an empty House, of an highly interesting character, between experts and ex-Indian officials and the Indian Secretary. Occasionally, indeed, the public mind was startled by some manifestation of popular feeling in India, as in the present state of Poona, and then it was urged in the Press of this country, and was echoed in Parliament, not to enquire into the means which had produced these disturbances, but to coerce the people into bearing in silence and meekness what they believed to be the burden of a wrong. He wanted the people of England to awaken to their responsibility to India. Famine, plague, and pestilence had been seized by the Indian Government for an attack on the freedom of the Press. He would endeavour to bring home to the House what an Indian famine meant. Eighty per cent. of the population were engaged in agricultural occupations, and 40 millions of the people were in a state of semi-starvation. Between 1861 and 1877 half a million of persons per annum died of starvation. The figures were: Upper India, 1861, 500,000; Orissa, Behar, N. Madras 1866, 1,500,000; Rajputana and Central India, 1869, 400,000; Northern India and Bombay, 1876-77, 5,500,000; North-West Provinces, 1877, 8,650,000. Much of the money raised for the last famine was appropriated to little wars. The question irresistibly arose how many lives might have been saved recently if the famine fund had been accumulated for the purpose for which it was designed. Scarcity was one thing, famine was another. He contended that famines would not occur if there was a Government in sympathy with the people. The millions of the poor natives of India were terribly overtaxed. The average income of a native was 1½d. a day. One of the chief causes to which he attributed the famine in India as distinguished from the great poverty of the people was that they had no control whatever over their own expenditure. The vast sums mentioned in the Budget just laid before the House were exacted from them without any opportunity on their part for opposition or resistance. The present Finance Minister of India, speaking in the Governor-General's Council recently, said:—"Other Finance Ministers when they present their statements have to defend the expenditure proposed against the representatives of the taxpayer. Here the position is exactly the reverse. The Finance Minister is the solitary representative of the taxpayers of India." The aim and inclination of the Minister was naturally to get as much money as possible from the people of India. He had no one to say a word on their behalf; he alone represented his victims. The opium traffic was one of the chief sources of revenue. But that traffic would not long continue if it were under popular control in India. Large tracts of land would not be allowed to be diverted from the growth of food and cereals for the purposes of such a traffic. One reason for the poverty of India was that its finances were subject to a constant drain. The Duke of Devonshire, when Secretary for India, admitted that no less than £3,000,000 a year was drained from this impoverished country for pensions and furlough allowances in India and elsewhere. The public debt of India when we took over the Government from the East India Company was £50,000,000 or £60,000,000. In 1879 it had increased to £150,000,000. At the present time it was above £180,000,000. The small wars and military expeditions of which he had spoken entailed great expense on the people of India, and was borne exclusively by them. Sir Lepel Griffin in a recent "interview" said it was absolutely necessary to provoke small wars on the confines of India to keep our army up to a proper state of efficiency. Troops were taken away from India for expeditions and service elsewhere, and the expense most unjustly thrown on the finances of India. It was the case with the China Wars, the New Zealand expedition, the Abyssinian War, the Egyptian War, and the Sudan expedition. Then the administration of India was costly. Why? Because the natives, not by law but by practice, were "boycotted" from posts in the Civil Service. Lord Lytton in 1888 wrote that in our policy towards the people of India we had to choose between bullying and cheating them, and it suited us better to cheat them. In 1893 the House adopted a Motion by Mr. Herbert Paul in favour of admitting natives to the Civil Service of India and holding the examinations for the service simultaneously in India and in London. But that Resolution had never been carried into effect by the Government of India although they were supposed to be the servants of the House of Commons. As far as could be the religious and caste feelings of the people should be respected.

Lord George Hamilton: Who said they were not?

Mr. MacNeill did not say they were not respected, but greater care should have been taken that all their sensibilities should be regarded. The duties of entering the houses ought not to be entrusted to English soldiers who could not regard the religious sensibilities of the people in the way in which those sensibilities should be regarded. In relation to the Press prosecutions he should not say one word in reference to those prosecutions which were pending, although he thought he should be entitled to comment on the delay of the Government in instituting such prosecutions. Some of the articles as to which proceedings were being taken were six months old, and the prosecutions, he alleged, were procured by men in that House. Their first idea should be to protect the people and not to gag the Press. On the question of the Press let him cite the observations of some very eminent judges. What said Sir Richard Garth, late Chief Justice in Bengal, and a former representative of extreme Toryism in that House? Writing in the *Law Magazine and Review* for February, 1895, he said:—"I can only say I read native papers myself week after week, and never see anything there at all approaching sedition or even disloyalty or disrespect to English rule. What I do find there, and what I rejoice to find, is thoroughly well-deserved censure of the arbitrary conduct of many of the Governmennt officials. I am afraid this is exactly what the Government would wish to repress. I consider it a most wholesome and salutary means of bringing the misconduct of Government officers to the notice not only of the Indian people but of the courts of justice." Sir William Markby, who was for twelve years an Indian judge, and who was now an esteemed and learned professor at Oxford, wrote to the *Spectator* of July 17 last:—"I should like to add one word on behalf of the native Indian Press, which is, I think, just now getting more abuse than it deserves. I have for years read regularly extracts from a large number of native newspapers. The criticisms I have met with are sometimes severe, but for the most part respectful. There is occasionally strong 'disapprobation,' but very rarely 'disaffection.'" He might explain that "disapprobation" could not be construed into sedition, provided it did not excite to acts of sedition against British rule. As he had said, he did not intend to say one word in reference to the incriminating articles in connexion with the pending press prosecutions, but how had the English press restrained themselves in the matter? He declared that he never looked into an evening paper without seeing what they, in this country, would regard as grave contempt of court with reference to the press prosecutions. Lord Harris had been a Governor of Bombay, and yet he was amazed to see a letter from that noble lord in the *Times* a day or two ago, in which he inferentially denounced the courts for not having convicted certain prisoners in his own time. The last point to which he called attention was the astonishing action of the Government of India and of the noble lord in arresting and imprisoning men under a system of

lettres de cachet. Without any sort of trial the men were imprisoned upon the warrant of the Viceroy, their only offence being that they were what the Viceroy called "dangerous persons." The Secretary for India said this action was taken with his authority, under Ordinance 25 of 1827. This regulation was based on an Ordinance of 1818, and the preamble set forth:—"Whereas, the security of the British dominions from foreign hostility and from internal commotions renders it necessary to place under restraint individuals against whom there may not be sufficient ground to institute any judicial proceeding, or when any such proceeding may not be adapted to the nature of the case, or may, for other reasons, be inadvisable or improper," and it provided for a warrant of committal. Upon a simple warrant of the Viceroy men could be arrested and kept in prison as long as the Viceroy pleased, subject to no controlling influence. And this was in the happy land of India we were loading with benefits! The noble lord, with amazing courage, stated that this action was taken after previous consultation with him; so it would seem that the Indian Government thought that this was so high-handed and tyrannical that they asked for the official sanction of the noble lord. He had been listened to by the House with great patience, and he had discharged his duty, he hoped, without using an offensive word against anyone. He wished the people of India to know that there were persons in Parliament who sympathised with them, and who took largely the same view of the degradation of their country produced by English rule as the natives did themselves; that there were persons who wished to extend to them the privileges and blessings of the British Constitution under which they had to live. In the concluding words of his resolution he desired to place on record his conviction that the only safe foundation for government in India was to be sought in the extension to British subjects in India of the full privileges of the British Constitution. He wished hon. members to have no misconception of his meaning, he wished those privileges to be gradually extended, and first, that personal liberty should be secured. He wished, in the words of Edmund Burke, that freedom should be as much the privilege of the poorest British subject in India as of the British subject in London. That personal freedom the natives of India had not. If we would govern India, not for the good of England, but for the good of India, and that would redound to the good of England, our first duty should be to extend to India justice and mercy, and not to goad her people by intolerable wrong into insurrection, and then providing no remedy for the wrong, drive them by repression into more strenuous resistance. We must not look upon India as a slave owner would look at his plantation. Having this great nation with its ancient civilisation and religious feeling under our charge we should do our best to show them forbearance, kindness, and consideration, giving them a reasonable, rightful measure of management of their own affairs. He moved the Resolution of which he had given notice.

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT.

MR. MICHAEL DAVITT in seconding the motion of his hon. friend, said he was relieved from the necessity of lengthy observations by the fact that the hon. member for South Donegal had travelled fully over the wide area embraced by the terms of the motion. His reason for intervening—his personal reason as a somewhat silent member for intervening in this discussion—was this: he had convinced himself, rightly or wrongly, that the House and the Press outside were unfairly biassed against the native Press of India, and some of the leaders of the Indian people in connexion with recent events in the dependency, and he, for one, would raise his humble voice against that violation of the spirit of justice and fairness that held a man, white or black, English or Indian, innocent until proved guilty. They had seen within the last few weeks the detestable Bourbon law of *lettres de cachet* put in force against British subjects in India, and in the House the Secretary of State for India had approved and applauded that policy. Distinguished leaders of the Indian people—one a Sirdar of the Deccan—had been arrested, deported, and sent to prison without having been brought before magistrate, judge, or jury, and such a policy as this should receive condemnation on both sides of the House if there was any sincerity in the professions of English statesmen that they were desirous of ruling India within the spirit, purpose, and meaning of the British Constitution. This policy of the noble lord, this policy of a Bourbon law, was sought to be defended on the ground that it was necessary to strike terror into people who were disaffected to British rule in India, but he was happy to know that the policy had not succeeded. The Indian people were not terrorised by the resort to a law which brought on the Bourbons of France the destruction of their dynasty, and which, if persisted in in India, he, as an Irishman, trusted would bring to an end English domination in that country. What was alleged as the reason for this high-handed proceeding of the noble lord and his subordinates in India? It was alleged that the law was put in force in consequence of incitations to disaffection and assassination on the part of some of the editors of the native Press in India. He denied there was ground for the allegation. Nothing had been brought before the public in this country in any of the translations he had seen of the comments of the native Press to justify this interpretation. He maintained that the House itself had been guilty in this connexion of a gross act of injustice. On July 15 the hon. member for Bethnal Green (Sir M. Bhownaggree), who occupied a seat in the House, not by the votes of his fellow-countrymen, but as the Unionist representative of a London constituency, thought it consonant with his ideas of justice and regard for his countrymen to put the following question to the Secretary for India: "Whether he was aware that in the last two years an annual celebration to stir up disaffection against England among the natives of India had been set on foot under the designation of the Shivaji Accession ceremony. . . . . Whether he was aware that Gungadhur Tilak, the editor of the *Mahratta* and *Kesari* newspapers, presided at the celebration and made a speech in which he counselled the murder of Europeans . . . . and whether any steps had been taken by the local authorities to stop such systematic training of large numbers of people and students, and the incitement of them to such actions as led to the assassination of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst within a week of the last Shivajee celebration?" He ventured to say with all respect to the noble lord the Secretary for India, that in his reply he also, if he would pardon him for saying so, was guilty of a breach of the law of fair play. His reply was an endorsement of the accusation, made without facts, without trial, by the hon. member. The noble lord said: "I am aware that an annual festival has recently been established in commemoration of Shivaji. I have seen a newspaper report of certain speeches made at the festival which took place last month, and it supports the description given in the second and third paragraphs of the question." Surely this was accusing a man and sentencing a man before the law in India had thought fit to touch him? He would ask the House—was there a Minister of her Majesty's Government who would dare to think of doing anything of that kind in connexion with any citizen of Great Britain or Ireland? He was justified in complaining of this want of fairness to a man, against whom the law had been afterwards put in motion. The man against whom these terrible accusations were levelled had received a mark of respect and honour never conferred on the hon. member opposite—he had been nominated twice to the Legislative Council of Bombay, by the central municipal body of that city. He sincerely hoped and trusted that better counsels would prevail in India than those suggested by the hon. member, and he believed there were signs of this. He was convinced that Tilak would get a fair trial notwithstanding that the Anglo-Indian Bar had, in a cowardly manner, declined to defend him on his trial. The cowardly crimes of assassination—and no words of his could be strong enough to condemn them—were exceedingly rare amongst the Indian people. Let them fancy 250 millions of people subject to foreign domination and foreign officialism, and was it to be wondered at that occasionally men would be driven to madness, and resort to abominable crimes of this kind. Let the House picture the difficulties which would confront them if, instead of having to deal with 250 millions of Indians they had to deal with 250 millions of Irishmen. (Laughter.) Their rule and their domination would be submerged, and there would be practically nothing of them left. He pleaded there that day for kinder consideration, fairness, and extenuation towards the native Press and towards the leaders of the people of India. They had shown exemplary patience and endurance, and they ought not to be as lightly condemned on account of one detestable crime as they had been almost universally by the Press of Great Britain. His contention was that the assassinations of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant

Ayerst arose directly from the carrying out of the plague regulations in Poona. The noble lord himself had admitted that these regulations, undertaken, he agreed, with the best purpose in the world, necessarily intruded upon the domestic life of the Indian people. Then, again, soldiers were employed in the performance of this essential work. He asserted that they had heard too many protests of innocence made on behalf of the British soldiers in India. Soldiers were more or less alike in one respect, whether they were British, or Russian, or French, or any other nationality; and, in face of the revelations contained in some of the Blue-books presented to that House about the condition of 60 or 70 per cent. of the British soldiers in India, was it a matter of astonishment or of surprise if one or two soldiers engaged in this work—this humane work, if they would—overstepped the bounds of discretion and morality and gave offence to native sentiment.

Lord George Hamilton: There is no evidence of that.

Mr. Davitt begged the noble lord's pardon. On the 26th July, in reply to a question addressed to him by the hon. and gallant member for Essex, he admitted the substantial accuracy of a statement alluded to in the question taken from the *Daily News*, to the effect that two girls had been assaulted criminally in the segregation inspection camp at Poona.

Lord George Hamilton: No, pardon me. There was an allegation made against two officers at the other end of India, but that had nothing whatever to do with Poona. Every allegation made in reference to misconduct on the part of British officers in Poona has not only not been substantiated, but has been withdrawn and apologised for. (Cheers.)

Mr. Davitt said the noble lord declared in his reply to the question that two officers had been suspended in consequence of the charge brought against them that they had attempted criminally to assault two native girls.

Sir M. Bhownaggree: That was on the Calcutta side.

Lord George Hamilton was understood to say that if the hon. gentleman would look at his reply, he would see that the transaction had nothing whatever to do with Poona.

Mr. Davitt said his general argument was that they knew what soldiers were, and he thought it was reasonable and fair to assume that soldiers engaged in this delicate and humane work—if they would—might overstep the bounds of propriety and morality. He would not labour that question any further. (Ministerial Cheers.)

Dr. Tanner: But it is true.

Mr. Davitt asserted that there were grounds for the discontent shown by the native Press of India, and he trusted that rational discontent would continue in the native Press and on the platforms of India until such a change was introduced into the government of the country as was indicated in the motion now before the House. Their only justification for holding India by the sword would be in making it a prosperous and contented country. He contended that they had failed to do that. They had, out of the 250,000,000, at least 170,000,000 absolutely illiterate, 150 years after the commencement of British domination, and they had, as the noble lord had pointed out, a growing population, increasing by 2,000,000 a year, while the area of cultivation of food products was not making the same progress. What were the remedies put forward by the noble lord and the Government of India? Any number of expeditions to the Border. There had been 20 Border expeditions, involving the expenditure of a large amount of Indian money, during the last 20 years. Then there was to be a continuation of the railway policy of the Indian Government. He admitted that the building of railways in India was a necessary and beneficial work, but he contended that after they had carrried out that policy to the extent they had, a better policy, one more required by the economic conditions of India, would be one which would sink more of India's own money in the carrying out of irrigation works, which experience had shown earned a very fair percentage of interest. He felt very strongly in sympathy with the Indian people. He felt the deepest sympathy with every people who were subject to another nation. He was one of those who believed that England had no right whatever to rule in any country outside her own borders—(ironical Ministerial cheers)—and he sincerely hoped and trusted that, unless the British Government would extend to British subjects in India hef ull right of protection of the British Constitution, the Indian people would undertake by means fair and honourable to win their own independence. (Cheers.)

Sir Charles Dilke.

Sir C. Dilke said his hon. friends had spoken with such an evident amount of sympathy and with so strong a desire to grasp Indian grievances, that it was a matter of regret to him that they did not seem to have thoroughly thought out the proposals which they asked the House and the country to adopt. They ought to congratulate themselves on having, upon Indian questions, the Irish members in that House, because when they had to record, perhaps, an undue amount of optimism in all their British notions with regard to the success they had achieved in India, they certainly heard the other side from their Irish friends, who acted the part of the Devil's Advocate in their intention to canonise themselves. But he could not but think that the truth, as usual, lay very much between the two extremes. He regretted he could not give any support to the Motion, because its one definite suggestion—namely, the extension of the British Constitution, whatever that might be, to India—was one which did not in the least commend itself to his views. (Ministerial cheers.) At the same time, though there might be no risk of the adoption of this somewhat vague Resolution by that House, especially as it was composed now of a large number of gentlemen who gave special attention to Indian questions, it was wise that they should fairly and fully discuss it, because undoubtedly there were a great number of people outside the House who might be tempted to think that a panacea for the evils of India might be found in the adoption of the principles of the British Constitution. The fallacy which always underlay the speeches of those who desired violent and sudden remedies for the existing evils in India was that India was a single country to which any one plan or panacea could be applied. Not only was India vast in size, but the difference in the degree of civilisation, in the race and religion of the people, were so enormous, the discrepancies were so much greater than any which existed in any part of Europe and America, that almost any general system of dealing with those difficulties was necessarily absurd. It was almost impossible to propose with any confidence any general remedy for all those grievances. He agreed that the electorate of this country should recognise continually their enormous responsibility for the government of India, greater really than their responsibility for the government of this country, because as regarded this country interested persons, the taxpayers and ratepayers, had votes, and if their interests were seriously assailed they could revenge themselves by the use of those votes, whereas our Government of India, which was indirectly a Government formed by the House of Commons, was necessarily autocratic in its nature. Consequently it was necessary to touch the public conscience if they were to produce any effect at all. He did not agree that the electorate of this country were indifferent to Indian questions, quite the contrary; what they had to face was rather ignorance of facts than any desire on the part of the people to avert their eyes from these facts, and it was not easy to get busy people to inform them. Again, he did not agree that, having regard to all the circumstances, the present attendance of members of the House was not a good one. After all, the House of Commons was composed of hard-working and practical men, and the fact that all the figures were known in advance, that there were no secrets to disclose, that everybody had had the opportunity of reading the whole financial statement of India, naturally deprived this occasion of the interest it otherwise would have. No fair man, in his opinion, could attribute the distress or famine in any sense to British rule. He agreed that every excuse should be made for any violence of language in the native Press of Poona in recent times, and he was not at all hopeful that the Government would improve their position or make their rule more easy by any attempt to return to former Press legislation or by the interference with the liberty of the Press. On the other hand, he could not go with his hon. friends when they suggested that interference with the liberty of the Press in India was a matter which came home to the hearts and consciences of the people of India as a whole. The overwhelming majority of the population, leading their lives in cultivating the soil, were not concerned one way or other in these matters. In fact, the Press reached even indirectly but a wretchedly small portion of the population. Now the claim was made that popular control of the Indian Government

would do all sorts of things. Everything his hon. friend desired to do he claimed popular control would do. But he did not offer the smallest proof of the accuracy of his assertion. He claimed, for example, that popular control would put down the growth of the opium poppy in India; they might as well talk of putting down, by popular control, the growth of tobacco in Turkey or elsewhere. His hon. friend, in striking at some of the deficiencies in our rule in India, did not strike at some of the worst points, and he would make him a present of some of them—for example, the fact that, however good our Government might be at the top, it really came home to the people in the form of native police, who were often oppressive and corrupt. Now, there were undoubtedly great evils connected with our government of India, but we had to look at the tremendous difficulties presented by a country so enormous and so diverse a country, which had never been a single country, with no past traditions of rule, a country where we had to create, from the very beginning, the greatest portion of the machinery of organised government. His hon. friend seemed to think that it would be possible now—given what was best in our rule, given the state of things to which we had already come—to create a single India enjoying the principles of the British constitution. The process which had gone forward under our rule, the process of unification had undoubtedly gone far, but it was an infinite distance from having gone so far as to give any chance of forming a single India. He believed that if by the stress of war our rule in India had to be relaxed it could not be replaced by a single Government or by one capable of ruling the country as a whole. He sympathised with the observations of his hon. friend, the seconder of the motion, as to arbitrary arrest; but the arbitrary arrest of fifty or one hundred persons during the last few years, the detention of ex-royal personages under arbitrary arrest in India, whether approved or not, was a comparatively small matter in looking at the unhappiness of India, the economic condition of the country, and the difficulties of the Government, as compared with the larger question which the mover of the motion dealt with. The hon. member for South Mayo violently attacked this power of arbitrary arrest, and called it the introduction of the Bourbon principle of *lettre de cachet*. But this principle existed under the French Republic at the present time, though not in the same form. It was accompanied now by publicity and responsibility to the Elective Assembly, and here the Secretary of State for India could be censured both by the House of Commons and by the electorate of the country. It seemed to him that both the rulers of India, the autocracy of India, and the ultra-reformers who desired to upset the existing system, made a great mistake when they laid so much stress on uniform treatment, when they paid too little regard to the immense differences between part and part of India. Portions of India were prepared for governing themselves almost entirely, with a controlling hand from this country; but other parts of the country were still in the condition of the early Middle Ages, and were not capable of governing themselves. The Government of India had tried to bring the elective element into the government of the provinces. These provinces varied in size, their inhabitants professed different religions, they were hostile to one another; and this elective plan did not, to his mind, satisfy either of the conditions which were desired. It did not improve the government of the country, and it did not give any real control to the people. (Hear, hear.) A more hopeful experiment would be one which recognised the enormous difficulties between part and part of the country. In Mysore, for example, they had a small State administered under British control by men who had been largely trained in our schools. Mysore governed itself by elective institutions in all its purely domestic affairs, and in his opinion it was the best governed part of India. That was an example of the kind of decentralisation to which he looked forward more strongly every year as the best hope for the improvement of the government of India. In 1876 Mysore was face to face with a famine vastly more disastrous than the recent famine in India. A million of the inhabitants died, but in 1881 Mysore had made good all the deficiencies in her revenue and population. He did not believe, however, that they could apply the Mysore system to a province of 60,000,000 as one group, and still less that they could apply anything like it to India as a whole. We could afford to give the freest privileges of self-government to many parts of India where the interest of the people in their rule, where the amount of cultivation and civilisation were sufficient to enable the people in all questions of domestic interest to rule themselves. There were other parts of India where representative institutions were inapplicable and calculated to produce ineffective government, while not giving the any real weight in the affairs of their province. He believed that the safe way in which to introduce natives and native opinion much more largely into the rule of the country was to decentralise in the direction of improving through our control and advice the government of the native States, gradually handing back even portions of the country, as in Mysore, to native rule. But we should remain responsible for all the larger affairs of State which affected India as a whole. (Hear, hear.)

Colonel Sandys.

Colonel Sandys said that he would like to say a few words as one who spoke from personal knowledge of India. He had spent many years in the country, and he was intimately acquainted with the natives, had taken part in their administration, and spoke their language. It was a matter of astonishment to him that hon. members from Ireland, who were not, as a rule, well acquainted with India, should take a lead in the ventilation of this question. He had always understood, before he entered the House, that a member of Parliament generally spoke on a subject with which he was thoroughly acquainted—(laughter)—more or less at any rate. A great deal of licence had been allowed to the native Press in India. Though it was advisable that this freedom should be allowed, yet if the native Press were permitted to proceed beyond certain limits an enormous deal of harm might be done in the country, (Hear, hear.) There should be a power in India which had in its hands the means of restraining undesirable licence in the native Press, and from his knowledge of the natives he thought that the Indian Government and the Secretary of State had followed a wise line of policy. (Hear, hear.) As to the alleged *lettres de cachet*, he said that there were circumstances in India which rendered it necessary that justice should be prompt and should strike unfailingly. He reminded the Irish members that Mr. Gladstone imprisoned 1,100 men under a form of *lettre de cachet*, which was at that time acceptable to the House of Commons. There were certain parts of India where such a rule as existed in Mysore might be followed, but to introduce popular control as we understood it here would, if carried out universally or applied to any large extent, extinguish British rule in India. They were dealing with a race of people who had been living for centuries under a military despotism of a crushing nature; and to prematurely introduce the privileges and the constitution of this country in the government of India would be a most dangerous experiment. He remembered hearing Prince Bismarck's secretary say, after seven year's investigation for the purpose of reporting to the German Government upon the British rule in Hindostan, that "the English administration of India was the finest thing the world had ever seen." If he might venture to give the House any advice, he would quote the Duke of Argyll's expression, that "India was not gained by speeches in Parliament," and he would add this, "but it might be lost by them." It was dangerous for the House of Commons to interfere much in the Government of India. The wisest thing that could be done, both for the people of India and for this country, was to leave India as much as possible to the Secretary of State, the Governor-General, and the Councils. (Cheers.)

Mr. John Dillon.

Mr. John Dillon said the hon. and gallant gentleman who had just sat down seemed to consider that it was not for Irish members to dare to address the House on Indian affairs, and he went on to lay down the principle that only those members who thoroughly understood the subject ought to speak in the House of Commons upon it. Well if that principle were observed in regard to Ireland—(hear, hear, and laughter from the Irish Benches)—they might push the principle a little farther, and say that only those who thoroughly understood that country should be sent over to govern that country, and then the House of Commons would be saved a great deal of trouble in Ireland. He would ask the hon. and gallant gentleman, before he lectured the Irish members, to endeavour to impress his principles upon his own party. It struck him as a singular instance of the self-righteousness and self-appreciation which were the characteristics of the

great race to which he belonged, that he seemed to assume that Irishmen were unfit, as a matter of course, to address the House on Indian affairs or to deal with Indian affairs in any way. It was rather a striking and singular commentary on his speech that the one name mentioned by the Secretary of State in commendation and laudation of the marvellous success of his administration in face of the famine and plague was an Irishman of his (Mr. Dillon's) own constituency. (Cheers.) This man would not, of course, be allowed to take any part in conducting the affairs of his own country, though he had shown himself so thoroughly capable of dealing with Indian affairs, and he had proved, at any rate, that if the hon. member for East Mayo was unfit to speak on Indian subjects, some of the people who had been inhabitants of East Mayo were qualified to manage Indian affairs with the special approval of the Secretary of State. (Cheers.) The fact was that "a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind." If Irish members had no knowledge of Indian affairs except what they obtained from books and newspapers, they had some knowledge of English administration in Ireland; and when they heard claims made in that House such as were made by the hon. and gallant member, that they should leave Indian affairs to the officials, and not attempt to criticise them, on the plea that the less said in the House of Commons about India the better, he replied that they had experience of these matters, they knew something of an irresponsible administration, because they had lived under it, and therefore their minds were more open to appreciate and understand the grievances of these poor people in India than were the minds of most English members. He remembered saying once that the man who was going to send another person to gaol ought to have a little experience of gaol himself. (Laughter.) If they were going to enter into the grievances of people who were suffering under an irresponsible administration, they would be far more able to appreciate the feelings of these people if they were suffering such things themselves. The hon. and gallant member referring to the case of the brothers Natu—who were now suffering from the exercise of the odious and detestable power of imprisonment without charge made against them—said in proof of the necessity for their arrest that even here the Government had been obliged to apply that power to Irish members, and therefore it must be a good thing in India. That was one reason why, perhaps, they took such an interest in these men, because they had known what it was to lie in prison for twelve months without trial; and, therefore, as he had no shame in confessing, he felt all the more keen sympathy with these men, because he knew the fierce feelings of anger that entered into a man's breast when he was seized and dragged from his home without warrant and without cause stated, at the will of an irresponsible minister, and was denied the birthright of every Englishman—namely, the right of *habeas corpus*, and the right to be heard and tried by his fellow-men. (Cheers.) These were the very reasons that made Irishmen sympathetic, and take an interest in the oppressions of the Indian people. When listening to the lecture of the hon. and gallant member he was reminded throughout the speech of the fact that in some of the parts of India that were best governed and where the feelings and prejudices of the people were most taken into account, it was due to Irishmen—countrymen of his own—who had come from a country where he had seen the sufferings of an oppressed agricultural population, and by that experience knew better how to sympathise with the suffering people of Bengal and other parts of India, and had made themselves the champions—to their honour be it said—of these poor people. He could name a whole string of Irishmen who had earned the blessings and the gratitude of the people of India, and finally the approval of the British Government. (Cheers.) These were facts and considerations which hon. members opposite ought to admit entitled the Irish members of that House to speak, even although their knowledge might not be as full as that of hon. gentlemen on the other side, entitled them to raise their voices for the people of India when others would not; and feeble though their efforts might be, and small their numbers, do something to bring the light of day to bear on the action of the Indian Government, and to protect the people of India from oppression. (Cheers.) He wanted to say a word as to the case of the brothers Natu. He had made no charge whatever in connection with this matter. He had listened with pained interest to all that took place in the House of Commons, and to the statements made in answer to questions, but he had made no charges. It might be quite true, as the Secretary of State for India had said, that there was no ground for the specific charges made against British soldiers of having committed outrages in Poona. He admitted that he was slow to believe in the charges against these men—for he knew that many of them were his own countrymen—of deliberate violence. But he did say, putting aside all these charges, and accepting the statement of the Secretary of State for India that no charge of misconduct or violence had been substantiated—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order! This does not arise on the amendment. It may arise on the general question, but not on the amendment.

Mr. Dillon said he would pass away altogether on that subject. He was desirous of saying a word on the imprisonment of the brothers Natu. These men were taken—he did not know what charge was made against them; he had not seen it stated in the newspapers, except that they had been seized upon as dangerous people. But he understood that they were Hindu Brahmins of high caste. They all knew something of what caste in India meant; but he must confess that he was not aware of the great pride of caste, and the excitement which the arrest of these men had caused among the people of Poona, until he had the privilege of entertaining two of them at lunch the other day, when he heard a great deal about this matter. These men, as he had said, were of high caste; and it required very little knowledge of India to know that a man of the highest caste, if they forcibly destroyed his caste or made him do anything in contravention of his caste, he would a great deal rather his life were taken. He understood that one of the brothers Natu was taken to the segregation camp; and he would ask the Secretary of State for India if he would tell them what precautions were taken, if any precautions were taken, to protect the caste of this man when in the general segregation camp. He contended that if it were necessary—though he could not believe there was any necessity for taking a man of high caste and putting him in a segregation camp under general regulations—but if the necessity existed, the greatest possible precaution ought to have been taken to protect his caste, and not to subject him to unnecessary humiliations and to what he would feel to be a degradation. They were entitled to know what was done—because something must have been done—to give rise to the exasperation which existed in Poona amongst the friends and relations of these brothers Natu. (Hear, hear.) Another man who has been arrested, Mr. Tilak, was at the time, and still remained, a member of the Legislative Council; and he was allowed, as he understood, to become a member of the Council after the articles that were now supposed to incriminate him were written. On what ground had he then been arrested? This gentleman was brought to Bombay, the object being to strike terror in the mind of the natives.

Lord George Hamilton: He was not brought to Bombay; he was already there. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr. Dillon said that that fact was not in the least materia to his argument. (Derisive cheers.) Mr. Tilak was twice brought before the Courts and bail was refused. Then he was brought up a third time and bail was granted. According to the *Times* correspondent the Court was crowded with natives, who cheered enthusiastically and drew the liberated man through the streets in triumph. Did the Indian Government hope to strike terror by provoking such scenes? Was the position of affairs improved by prosecuting this man? There were certain principles of personal liberty which whether they were violated in Bombay or in Ireland, every one could understand. It was right for Irish members—if no one else would do it—to rise in the House of Commons and speak on behalf of these principles and protest against these high-handed acts. In this particular matter he believed that Irishmen expressed the views of a large section of the people of both countries. If the British Government in India could not win the assent and approval of the people it had no right to exist. The motion of his hon. friend meant that the future stability of the British Government in India was to be sought in the extension to the people of India, not the whole machinery of the House of Commons, but those principles of even-handed justice, individual liberty, fair play to the poor, and responsible government in some shape, which were recognised as the principles of constitutional government in this country. (Hear, hear.)

LORD G. HAMILTON'S REPLY.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, who was imperfectly heard, was understood to say that no discussion of Indian affairs could take place without it being necessary to impress upon everyone the admonition of the right hon. member for the Forest of Dean. There were 250 millions of people in India, but they were not homogeneous. They were rather a mosaic of sects and races. Hon. members from Ireland had praised the rule in some of the native States. (Nationalist cries of "No!") With very few exceptions, there was not one native State in which the ruling class were not in an enormous minority. (Cheers.) If constitutional principles were introduced the present ruling class would be at once deposed. The hon. member for East Mayo had said that if the population of India was 250 millions of Irishmen England could not govern them. He quite agreed with the hon. member. (Laughter.) The 250 millions of Irishmen would set to work and conquer the world—(cheers and laughter)—such faith had he in the race to which he belonged—and when they had nobody else to fight then the real row would begin. (Laughter and cheers.) No one contended that our rule in India was perfect. There were obvious difficulties in governing a country of such enormous extent from a little island separated from it by thousands of miles. It was most unfair to test the system of government in India by that which existed in this country. The real test was the government which preceded British government, the government which would succeed it. (Cheers.) If the true principle of the British constitution was to develop individual liberty and to give everyone as much liberty as possible, British rule in India had accomplished that result to a most remarkable extent. (Cheers.) But, after all the object of all Governments, and notably of the British Government, was to give liberty of action and freedom of expression as far as was consistent with the safety of the community. (Hear, hear.) That was the governing consideration. We were a phlegmatic race compared with many of the nations of Europe, and we could permit in this country a freedom of action which would not be safe in other countries. Every Government in the world—whether it were the democratic Republic of the United States, or the Republic of France, or one of the autocratic monarchies of Europe—must have a reserve of power for times of emergency. All Governments obtained additional powers when they had to deal with exceptional difficulties, either by the temporary suspension of constitutional rights or by special legislation. But, as a rule, the difficulties with which they had to deal were so gradual that they afford time to obtain the powers in a leisurely way. But in India the religious and political atmosphere was charged with electricity. (Cheers.) The liberties of the British Constitution did not apply, for instance, to criminal lunatics; and in India, almost without warning, an apparently peaceful population might suddenly become as dangerous as criminal lunatics, with but one object before them—to murder the class alien to them. As every one knew, Madras was one of the most peaceful part in India. But from time to time there were outbreaks among the law-abiding people. A sudden fit seized them, and a number of quite young men, perhaps, would band themselves together to murder all who were not of their sect; and when troops were sent against them they killed as many of the troops as they could, and then got killed themselves. In this country we had special legislation to deal with dynamiters. But no explosive ever conceived by modern science was half so dangerous as the religious and political fanaticism in India. Therefore the Government of India could not have recourse only to the usages and methods of Western Governments. They must have a special power behind them, to be used from time to time. Every Government which had to deal with an Oriental population must have this power behind it; and the great distinction between the British Government in India and every other Eastern Government—with the exception, perhaps, of Japan—was that while with them despotic methods were the rule, the British Government had recourse to them but rarely. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member who spoke first on this question never once alluded to the two foul murders which had been perpetrated in Poona. (Hear, hear.) The Seconder of the Motion did; and, although he thought that the hon. gentleman held dangerous doctrines, he noticed that he denounced murder and outrage. It was not the first occasion on which the hon. gentleman had done so. Let the House consider for a moment what was the position of the Bombay Government. They had exceptional difficulties to deal with, and they had to stamp out the plague. Two officers were murdered, and both the hon. members for Mayo insinuated that, although nothing was proved, it was not unlikely that something had occurred to provoke the murders.

Mr. DILLON: I made no insinuation against the soldiers. I said it was extremely likely that they had been offensive to the religious susceptibilities of the people. I should be very sorry to insinuate, without clear proof, that they had committed any outrage.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON pointed out that the insinuation remained. The charges adumbrated by the hon. member for South Mayo against British soldiers were absolutely without foundation. (Hear, hear.) He had seen letters from nurses who were in attendance on patients, and from officers, and in all these communications there were expressions of admiration with regard to the extraordinary patience and good behaviour of the soldiers. The representatives of the German and Russian Governments on the spot used similar language, stating that the manner in which houses were searched set an example which other nations similarly situated would do well to follow. (Hear, hear.) But what happened? A certain knot of persons in Poona set themselves to malign Mr. Rand and his coadjutors. The murders were perpetrated, and they were cold-blooded murders, carefully thought out and deliberately planned. They were not the deeds of a fanatic smarting under some sense of supposed wrong—under a belief, for example, that some outrage had been done to his family. Everybody, he thought, would admit that the persons who committed these crimes ought to be brought to justice. He believed that if anyone of the members from Ireland who had spoken, had been in the position of the Governor of Bombay he would have acted in the same way, and would have relegated the British Constitution to the place to which it properly belonged—(laughter)—he meant to that House. (Laughter and hear, hear.) The two native gentlemen who had been arrested were notorious men, and this was not the first time that they had been brought before the notice of the public. He believed that the authorities at Bombay were within their rights in the action which they had taken, and that the result the proceedings would be to unravel the plot that had been formed. The hon. member for East Mayo had enunciated principles absolutely antagonistic to the elementary doctrines of the British Constitution. The hon. member argued that it was a great mistake to have set the law in motion, because when bail was granted, the individual who was arrested was acclaimed and taken away in triumph by the mob. Did the hon. member seriously maintain that a man who was thought to be concerned in a crime ought not to be brought before a Court of law because he was popular? The principle of the British Constitution was that the law was no respecter of persons, and he believed that one reason why this dead set was made against Mr. Rand was, because in the just discharge of his duties he drew no distinction between rich and poor. (Hear, hear.) Hon. members opposite said that the brothers Natu were men of high caste, and that every consideration ought to be shown for caste. With that he agreed. We ought to show the utmost regard for the religious usages and customs of a country whose civilisation was far older than our own. But he believed that nothing was done in the segregation camp which could affect Mr. Natu's caste. What occurred was this. There was a death in the house of one of the brothers Natu. It was reported to the Commissioner, and the body of the child that had died from the plague was found in the garden of one of the brothers. He told the Commissioner that it was the child of one of his servants. The story being believed he was not sent to the segregation camp, but it was subsequently found that the story was untrue, and that the child was the child of one of the brothers, who had buried it in the garden. The law was then carried out.

Mr. DAVITT asked what steps were taken in the segregation camp to observe the caste of the brothers?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON could not say, but probably there were persons of quite as high a caste as the brothers Natu in the segregation camp, and he had never heard that a person's treatment in a segregation camp resulted in his losing caste. It was pertinent to remember, in discussing this matter, that a number of native gentlemen were acting on the plague committees. Almost all the complaints which had been made had been found, after investigation, to have been concocted in

Poona. In fact, there had been a most deliberate conspiracy in Poona—not the first of its kind—to disseminate through the press false information, which had even impressed hon. members in that House. He thought he had been able to show that the stories thus circulated were a tissue of fabrications. (Hear, hear.) He agreed that the Government ought to be very chary of using the power which had been used in this case, but on this occasion it had been exercised legitimately. (Hear, hear.) Pending the trials which were to take place, he could not make a fuller statement, but next Session hon. members would be able to raise the question again, and he believed he would be in a position to satisfy them that what had been done was right.

Mr. MacNeill asked leave to withdraw his Amendment, but leave was withheld.

The House divided on Mr. MacNeill's Amendment, when the figures were:—

For the Amendment	17
Against	97
Majority against ..	80

Sir W. Wedderburn.

On the return of the Speaker, after the usual interval, and an ineffectual attempt to count out the House,

Sir W. Wedderburn said that this was the one appointed opportunity in the year for discussing the general affairs of India, and he much regretted that it had been fixed for a date when the House was practically broken up, and also that it had fallen at a time of some anxiety in India in several directions, so that it was difficult to discuss affairs as freely as was desirable on account of the fear of in any way embarrassing the Government. He referred especially to events at Malakand, regarding which much might be said, and perhaps ought to be said. He felt it however his duty to say a few words upon what after all was the great central question for India, as well as for all other countries; he meant the condition of the masses. All other matters, however important they might appear, were by comparison accidental and transitory. But upon the condition of the masses depended the success and safety of our rule. There was a pathetic proverb in India which said that the worst form of rebellion was the rebellion of the belly. And he besought the people of this country not to lose sight of this central point of the whole situation. If the masses were contented and prosperous, all would be well. Now in India, in speaking of the masses, they meant the rayats or peasant cultivators who, with their belongings, comprised some 80 per cent. of the whole population. They lived grouped together in rural village communities, of which there were about half a million in the whole of India. And his contention had always been that the way to get at the truth regarding the rayat's past history, his present condition, and future prospects, was to make a careful and detailed village enquiry, learning from each individual rayat his experiences, and what were his complaints, and what form of relief he most required. Unhappily they had reason to believe that the rayats as a class were in a condition of deep destitution. Had they possessed a reasonable store of food, of money, or of credit, they would have been able to tide over at least one failure of harvest. But the experience of the famine showed that they were not able to do this. As a rule they not only possessed nothing, but much less than nothing—being hopelessly indebted to the money-lenders. He therefore last January, as an amendment to the Address, had pressed the noble lord the Secretary of State for India to grant a village enquiry of this kind by local representative Committees, in the several provinces; pointing out that this did not involve a Commission from England, or any disturbance of famine work, and that the cost would be quite nominal. The noble lord had not shown himself altogether averse to enquiry. He had been so good as to say that he (Sir William) had advanced some practical suggestions, and even that (with certain qualifications) he had made a sensible speech. As regards the proposed enquiry the Secretary of State had said that he agreed that the opportunity of the famine ought not to be allowed to pass without taking every opportunity to enquire into and ascertain the best methods of protecting the people of India from the recurrence of similar calamities. This sounded hopeful. But he (Sir William) feared that the enquiries contemplated by the noble lord were purely official enquiries in the ordinary departmental routine, and from such investigations drastic reforms such as were required could hardly be expected. The fact was, the existing official system was chiefly to blame for the rayat's difficulties. Upon this point he offered himself as a witness, as he had made the rayat his special study for the last 30 years and more. He also thought he was an impartial witness, for he began his enquiries with all the prepossession in favour of the official system natural to a member of the Civil Service. But he gradually and reluctantly came to the conclusion that a great portion of the land revenue system, though good in theory and well intentioned, was not suited to the condition of the rayat. In now renewing, therefore, his proposals for enquiry, he had sent to every member of the House a statement showing the facts and figures upon which his conclusions were based. The conclusions were that there were three main causes of the rayat's distress: (1) The excessive revenue demand. The orders of the Home Government were that the revenue demand should not be a rack-rent, but should leave with the cultivator the wages of labour, the interest on capital, and half the true rent. But it was officially admitted that compliance with this instruction was practically unknown in India; the Government demand trenched upon interest on capital and wages of labour; nevertheless in spite of this admission the Government demand was being continually enhanced, up to 100 per cent. in some villages, and even 1,000 per cent. in certain individual holdings. The second main cause of the rayat's distress was (ii) the harsh and rigid mode of collection, which exacted punctual payment of a fixed annual cash assessment, thus placing upon the rayat the burden of uncertain seasons, a burden he was not able to bear, so that he was driven to the money-lender; and the third cause was (iii) the establishment of debt courts on the European model, which had armed the money-lender with all the power of the Empire, and enabled him to reduce the rayat to the lowest depth of serfdom. These facts were all painfully familiar to the rayats, and were well known throughout India. But unfortunately they were not known to the House or to the British public. The troubles thus produced were capable of a remedy, and in each case he had indicated the direction in which the remedy should be sought, by a cautious return to the old native custom. Further, he had matured a scheme for rescuing the rayat from the toils of the money-lender by means of Agricultural Banks. This scheme had received general approval, and was cordially supported by the Viceroy of India in Council. But it was vetoed by the India Office. He would not weary the House by going more into details, but he would claim that he had established a case for an enquiry on the lines asked for in the amendment. From his personal experience he firmly believed that by this simple and easy method much might be done to improve the condition of the masses, thereby spreading contentment throughout the land. (Hear, hear.) He desired to add a few words regarding the present situation in India and the proposal contained in the first part of the amendment. At the last great famine, 20 years ago, the mortality was estimated by the Famine Commissioners at $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions. They had no means of knowing what the mortality was in the present famine. But the area affected was greater than on the former occasion, and in spite of the praiseworthy and well-organised efforts on the part of the Government, the suffering and death must be very great, and must continue for several months more, even if favourable rains produced a crop which could be reaped in October. In addition to the famine had come the plague, and in some parts the earthquake, so that men's minds were nearly distracted, their hearts failing them from fear. Under these circumstances he felt sure that the House would gladly send them a kindly message of sympathy. Especially such an expression of sympathy seemed called for when they contrasted the exuberant prosperity of this country with the present unhappy condition of the masses in India. And further he would most earnestly deprecate any unnecessary measures of severity towards the people of India in any shape or form. The wise doctor was very forgiving to a suffering patient. His gentleness would not be mistaken for weakness. He would not be angry for anything the sufferer did in the paroxysm of his fever. On the contrary, he would only redouble his efforts to remove the cause of his delirium. Similarly he (Sir William) would appeal to the noble lord the

Secretary of State for India to be very merciful towards the Indian people, who were sick almost unto death. The noble lord had spoken the other day of an iron hand in a velvet glove. But under the existing grievous circumstances the hand should not be of iron. What was needed was not an iron hand but a human hand, strong and kindly, ready to help the weak and raise those that were fallen. As regarded events at Poona, he thought the matter had been exaggerated. He believed that it would be found that the assassinations were isolated crimes unconnected with any widespread conspiracy. Doubtless there were everywhere in India certain elements of danger, but there were greater elements of safety. The party of constitutional reform known as the Indian National Congress made it its business to meet the dangers and assuage them, as far as it could, by having everything open so as to avoid secret conspiracy, to mitigate race hatreds, and to see that all respected the religion of others. The Congress party had three great principles. The first was that all its actions should be based on the stability and prosperity of British rule; the second that all its methods should be open and above board; and the third that its action should be strictly constitutional and law-abiding. If any movement was not in accordance with these three great principles, the Congress would have nothing to say to it. The Congress had two main objects—to prevent secret conspiracies, and to bring every grievance to the notice of the Government, also respectfully to make representations to the Government for the redress of grievances, because it believed that by the redress of grievances the people would be rendered both prosperous and contented, and this was the only way to make the British Government strong and based on a good foundation. There were two elements of safety—the principal one that the great body of the people, especially the educated classes, believed that it was only under the stability of the British Government that any happy future for India was possible. He feared very much that measures might be taken from want of thorough appreciation of the situation and sympathy with these poor suffering people who, he was willing to admit, might in their frenzy do things they might afterwards be sorry for. If the police were not trustworthy it was dangerous to put them in authority over the people at large, and all oppressive measures were dangerous because they had to be carried out by an organisation not in itself trustworthy. If oppressive police measures were taken they would paralyse and alienate those who wished the British Government well, and would drive discontent inwards, and that was the way the powers of the party of violence were strengthened. (Hear, hear.) He earnestly warned the Secretary for India to be careful. No one could doubt that, as regarded the Poona affair, the great body of the people of India, especially the educated classes, regarded the assassinations with the utmost detestation and horror. The natives of India were a humane, gentle race, and in the vast country of India assassinations were quite unknown. Those who, like himself, had lived in India had felt more safe there than in London. In India they lived with doors and windows open. In India they were not afraid of burglars, and if a man wanted to send his wife and children across country he put them in charge of a native guard, and knew that they would be safe. The natives of India were a gentle, trustworthy, and humane race, and he could not understand why the Anglo-Indian press so constantly wrote against them and insulted them. What was there to be gained by making the natives unfriendly? The natives of India abominated odious crimes such as those that had taken place, as they were the chief sufferers by such crimes if the Government were driven to measures of severity. These crimes were hateful to them because they prevented the possibility of the peaceful, gradual, and constitutional reforms on which their hearts were set, and which they regarded as necessary for the future welfare of the country. He therefore trusted the Secretary for India would hold the balance steadily, maintain a judicial position, and not be the apologist of the India Office or the Executive, but as the representative of her Majesty hold the balance evenly and hear the weaker side. The official class in India had all the power in their hands. It was the people who were weak, and they looked to the Secretary for India to be their protector. Let him give them an impartial hearing, and treat them kindly and leniently. The wise course for the Indian Government to pursue was to preserve a firm but humane attitude, conciliating the goodwill of the great body of the people whose interests were identical with those of a just and kindly Government. And in this connexion he might say that it was not even now too late to extend to India some boons in connexion with the Jubilee. (Hear, hear.) Such a gracious act would do much to calm down the unavoidable unrest produced by such an accumulation of misfortunes; whether such concessions took the form of a further expansion of the Legislative Councils, or a legislative limitation of the Government revenue demand, as an encouragement to the suffering cultivators. Confidence begat confidence. And what he desired was to see British rule recognised not as an alien domination but as the National Government, giving contentment to the masses, and free scope to the aspirations of those who hoped to raise India to a noble place among the nations of the world. (Cheers.)

MR. SAMUEL SMITH.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH said they had seldom approached an Indian Debate under such painful circumstances as this year. That great country was suffering from the horrors of the worst famine of this century, from a terrible plague, from a destructive earthquake, from frontier disturbances, and from widespread discontent. They had Jubilee rejoicings over the greatness and prosperity of the British Empire, but by far the largest province of that Empire had no heart to share in the rejoicings. He hoped they should discuss the question of India that night in an earnest and sympathetic spirit, and show their fellow-subjects there that they would do all they could to alleviate their sufferings. He was sorry to think that there could be no real alleviation of the famine till the next harvest was reached in October or November after the monsoon. The present condition of things was far worse than people in this country supposed. Some forty or fifty millions of people were suffering from acute famine, some thirty millions more from scarcity. The price of food in the famine districts was 200 per cent. above the usual rate; the bulk of the people had parted with all they possessed; the poor peasants had mostly lost their cattle, and had sold their agricultural implements, their silver ornaments, and cooking utensils, and had no means to carry on agriculture even after the famine was over. Multitudes of families had been broken up in going to the relief camps; in many cases the bread-winners had died, and left helpless women and children. The family system, which was the basis of Hindu life, was shattered in a large part of India, and they were face to face with a huge mass of disorganised and helpless humanity. From all he could gather, the loss of life had already been appalling, not only from direct starvation, but from the diseases that followed it. He noticed that last February the deaths in the distressed districts in the North-West and the Central Provinces were 26,000, against an average of 12,000 the preceding ten years; in some places the death rate was seven times the normal rate. He feared these figures would grow worse and worse till October, and when the final results were summed up, he much feared that the loss of life would run into millions. Among many letters that he had read from the famine districts, he would quote from one by a well-known Hindu lady, Pandita Ramabai, who, by great self-denial, had saved a large number of orphans from the Central Provinces. She described a visit to one of the Poor Houses or Relief Camps: "The first poorhouse we saw was no house at all. It was a grove in the outskirts of the town. Groups of famished people were seen sitting all round the grove. Some were lying down in heaps, or sitting or lying in ashes on the dirty ground. Some had rags to cover their bodies, and some had none. There were old and young men, and women and children, most of them ill, too weak to move about, and many suffering from leprosy and other unmentionable diseases. Bad men, immoral women, pure young girls, innocent children and old people, good, bad, and indifferent, were freely mixing and conversing with each other. They slept in the open air or under the trees at night, and ate the scanty and coarse food provided by the Government. The food was nothing but dry flour and some salt. An accustomed eye could at once see that the grain was adulterated with earth before it was ground into flour. There were several starving orphan children who could not cook for themselves, and had no one to work for them. So they had either to eat the dry flour or depend upon the tender mercies of their fellow-sufferers, the older persons, who took as much of their food as they could, with the right of their might. The poor people seem to have lost all human feeling. They

are most unkind towards each other and the little children around them. They do not care even for their own children. Some parents eat all the food they get for themselves and for their little ones, and become quite fat, while their children are starved and look like skeletons, and some are even in a dying state, and yet their fathers and mothers feel no affection for them. Parents can be seen taking their girl-children around the country and selling them for a rupee or a few annas, or even for a few seers of grain. The food given to the children is snatched from their hands, and eaten by their stronger neighbours. In some places the Government officials give two pices or more to each child, or old and sick persons unable to work; but what can a baby of two or three years of age do with two copper pices in its hands?" The House will note that she stated the food was adulterated with earth. This was the doing of the subordinate officers, such as the *mukadams* or cooks. She said: "Few of the subordinate officers, such as the *mukadams* (overseers) and cooks, who have it in their power to give or withhold from the poor the food sent for them, have any heart or conscience. The grain—the very cheapest kind—is bought and ground into flour without being cleaned of the sand and earth it contains. Then the heartless cooks steal the flour and put a quantity of earth into it, while they cook the *dal* and *roti*, and nobody notices that the food is thus adulterated. The poor people are too much afraid of the *mukadams* to complain to the higher officials The flour and pulse so adulterated, when made into *rotis* and *dal*, do not look any better than cakes of cow-dung." Those Relief Camps were destructive to the morals of women and girls. She went on to say: "Young men can be seen everywhere talking to girls and women under the pretence of doing the *mukadam's* work. This is no good sign at all. Wicked men and women are everywhere on the look out for young women and girls. They entice them by offering sweatmeats and other kind of food, clothing, and fair promises to take them to nice places and make them happy. So hundreds of girls, young widows, and deserted wives, are waylaid as they go to the Relief Camps and poorhouses in search of food and work, and taken away before they place themselves in the custody of the Government." He need not say more to show the terrible disintegration of Indian society that was taking place. He did not blame the Anglo-Indian officials. They were doing the utmost they could; they were working beyond their strength, and many had died from exhaustion. In one district five civil servants had died; but no government could save 50 millions of famine-stricken people. His object in bringing these painful facts before the House was to show that they must dig deeper and try more drastic remedies, and, above all, abandon their habit of easy self-complacent optimism. It would be said the famine was the act of God, and how was Government responsible for this? He granted it; but India had periodical famines, and their true policy was to fight them by more copious irrigation works, and a better land system. The Indian Government had spent enormous sums on railways of late years, but comparatively little on irrigation works. The railways had done much good, but they did not grow food, and they did not prevent it going to a famine price in a year like this. Irrigation gave fine crops in the worst seasons. Then the railways as a whole had never paid their cost. They still cost the Government two or three crores a year, say two to three millions of tens of rupees. From the beginning of the system the loss on railways to the State had been 51 crores, including military railways, and protective railways against famine. Irrigation works had in several cases paid the capital expenditure several times over; in other cases they had been a financial failure, but their average dividend was about 5 per cent.; yet they had only spent one-tenth as much on irrigation works as upon railways He quoted these figures from the excellent Memorandum recently addressed to the Secretary of State for India. The fact was, powerful British interests were constantly pressing the India Office to extend railways in India, as most of the material was bought in this country, but no pressure was put upon it to extend irrigation works, as the expenditure was all in India. It would be replied that Government can only construct such works on the line of the great river basins, such as the Ganges, the Jumna, the Godavery, etc., while most of the country is above the level of the river basins. This was true, and river and canal irrigation could not be extended to most of India; but irrigation by wells and tanks was possible over nearly all of India, and this work could be done by the peasantry far better than by the Government. Our policy should be to encourage the peasantry by every means to do their own irrigation. They should have security of tenure, something in the nature of a permanent settlement on the soil to give them an interest in providing tanks and wells. To a peasant this was a serious piece of work; it meant the occupation of all his spare time for years, and, of course, he would not undertake it unless he knew he would reap the fruits of his labour. When he was in India, he was everywhere told this was one of the greatest of drawbacks, this want of security. It was simply the Irish question as it was before 1881. The noble lord said that suffering had been greater where there was permanent settlement, but could he name any district where the rayats had a permanent settlement? The zemindars in Bengal had a permanent settlement, but they were a large landed class, with thousands of small tenants and it was like giving a permanent settlement to the worst class of landlords in Ireland. The zemindars in Bengal were originally tax collectors. Lord Cornwallis unwisely gave them a fixed settlement, and they rack-rented their tenants terribly until the recent Act conferring occupancy rights on the rayats. It was strongly stated in India that our system of land assessment was a great discouragement to these small irrigation works. Most of the soil is re-assessed every thirty years, and the rayats are afraid to sink their capital from fear of exorbitant re-assessments, as the land is much more productive by irrigation. Some of the wisest of the Indian Viceroys, like Lord Canning, were of opinion that there ought to be a permanent settlement of the Land Tax, so that the peasantry could feel entire security in improving their land, knowing that all the benefit would go to themselves. Lord Halifax accepted this view in his famous dispatch of 1862. He commended this great question to the attention of the Indian Government. But an even more urgent remedy was to rescue the Indian peasantry, who are 80 per cent. of the whole population of India, from the grasp of the money-lender. They were nearly all hopelessly in debt. India possessed village userers of the type of Mr. Kirkwood by tens of thousands. The peasantry were often charged 5 per cent. per month. Our system of collecting the revenue by punctual cash payments, whatever the season or size of the crops, had thrown the farmer into the hands of the usurer. He quoted the opinion of the late Sir James Caird, one of the best agriculturalists of this country, who was on the Famine Commission, which made one of the best reports on India he had ever met with. It was a perfect mine of information on all rural and social questions. Sir James Caird said: The right of the cultivator to mortgage the public land has made him the slave of the money-lender. Government rent must be paid on the day it becomes due. It is rigorously exacted by the officials, and as the money-lender is the only capitalist within reach the cultivator gives a charge on the land, and hands over all his crop as a security for cash advances. The old Indian Governments took a share of the crop, so in bad years the rayats had to pay little. We require prompt payment in all seasons, though revenue is sometimes remitted in bad famine years. Then we enable the usurer to collect his debts by distraint on the property of the peasant. He applies to the Small Debt Court, and gets a decree to sell him up just as Mr. Kirkwood and his kind in this free country sell up their wretched clients. In olden times in India a little village tribunal, called the Panchayet, of five village elders, arbitrated in such cases, and protected the ignorant peasant against Shylocks. This was impossible now with our elaborate judicial proceedings. What we needed in India was to go back to those more primitive customs which were far better suited to a primitive people. We in the present day, perfectly satisfied with our own system, sometimes made experiments on native races with lamentable results. No one understood this question better than his friend, Sir William Wedderburn; none more truly sympathised with the Indian peasant. He commended to the Indian Government his scheme of agricultural banks, which was most unwisely nipped in the bud by the India Office in former years. He had indicated the lines of a drastic land reform in India. The impoverishment of the peasantry was the tap root of all our difficulties in India; it was the cause of most of the disaffection which now existed. India would never be contented till the peasantry were more prosperous. He strongly recommended that an exhaustive enquiry should be made into the subject. The report of the last Famine Commission had had been forgotten, and had not been acted upon. He strongly

advised the re-issue of the recommendations of that Commission. But these reforms, even if adopted, would only bear fruit in the distant future; something more was needed to meet the present terrible distress. The Indian Government only undertook to give bare subsistence to the victims of famine. It could not do more, for it had to raise the cost from the poor taxpayers in India, yet we were told in the report of Mr. James, the Government Inspector, that, "40 lakhs are needed for seed alone in the North-West Provinces. The fact is, the dearth has been so widespread that contributions have been a mere drop in the ocean. When prices rise 50 per cent. over usual, all margin over mere capacity to sustain life is cut off. The amount of relief that could be given without including any but cases of real acute distress is practically limitless." The schemes of improvement I have submitted could not be carried out under many years. They dealt with the India of the future, and help was needed for the suffering masses of the people of India at present. Our country was prosperous, our colonies were prosperous; we were congratulating ourselves on the greatness of the Empire, but over our huge Indian possessions, containing the largest population, hung the greatest gloom and misery. Could we do nothing in this Jubilee year to alleviate this? He appealed to the Government and to the House to make a special grant to India in this time of awful need. Our income was overflowing; we should have another large surplus next year. What better use could we make of one or two millions than devoting such a sum to the alleviation of the misery in India. It would be the most worthy celebration of the Jubilee year. It would do more to appease discontent in India than any number of Press prosecutions. Parliament would approve of it, it would be popular in this country and he was sure it would be a wise thing to do politically. We were not a sentimental people; we were slow to recognise how great a part sentiment played in the government of the world. He was sure such an act would touch the heart of India and do more for the safety of our Empire than increased armaments. What they required was some fund which could be applied for the benefit of the peasantry after the famine was over so as to give them a fresh start. He thought £2,000,000 could be so applied as to confer immense benefits upon India, and that it would touch the hearts of the people of that country as nothing else had done. He believed that, in certain circumstances, measures of repression might be necessary, but a far wiser policy would be a generous act of this kind, which would have a marvellous effect. He appealed to the House to signalise this year by a great act of mercy to India, and he hoped the Government would consider his suggestion and not hastily commit themselves against it. In his view, great perils lay before them in India, and they should anticipate them in a wise and statesmanlike way.

SIR M. M. BHOWNAGGREE.

Sir M. BHOWNAGGREE thought it both his duty and privilege on that the first occasion on which he had had the opportunity of addressing the House on an Indian subject since the terrible atrocities that had occurred in India to express the horror, the indignation, and the humiliation felt by the loyal millions of that country at the dastardly crimes with which the efforts of the Government to arrest the plague had been rewarded. (Hear, hear.) He spoke with a great sense of responsibility in the matter, but he was perfectly sure that, in saying what he had, he spoke in the name and on behalf of the millions upon millions of people in India, who felt the humiliation and the degradation of the act which had been committed, because they realised and were always ready to acknowledge, the manifold blessings of peace and progress which had been carried to them by British rule. (Cheers.) The hon. member who moved the motion declared that he had resolved from henceforth to proclaim to the constituencies of the United Kingdom that they did not realise what responsibility lay upon their shoulders with respect to the 300 millions of people in India whom they governed, and that he was going to try his best to arouse them to a sense of that responsibility. He congratulated him upon that sentiment, but when he saw just 17 hon. members on the benches opposite, he confessed he had not much faith in the hon member for Donegal's chances of success. Moreover, it was worth while remembering that those who had taken Indian matters under their benevolent control had decided, in their wisdom, only to ask members on the Opposition side of the House to take part in their deliberations. There was a Parliamentary Indian Committee, consisting of 140 or 150 members on the Radical side, but how many of the 150 were present that night when the affairs of India were being considered by the House? He presented it to the consideration of hon. members whether it was not a misrepresentation to give it out to the Indian public that the members of this House on the Ministerial Benches did not care for India, and that the only ones who did care sat on the opposite side. He could afford to treat the remarks levelled at him personally by two or three members opposite earlier in the debate either with amused indifference or contempt. He would acquit them of having any personal feeling in the matter, under the assurance they had given that they were not acquainted with the country they talked about. He remembered a question repeatedly asked on the other side whether it was a fact that the caste of the Natus had been broken by one of them being taken to the plague hospital. He believed that on this point they were misled by the information given to the hon. member for Mayo by two gentlemen from India of a Hindu caste, whom he informed us he had invited to lunch in this House.

MR. DILLON: I asked the noble lord, the Secretary of State, whether that statement was a fact? I saw the statement in the *Times* newspaper.

Sir M. BHOWNAGGREE: By whomsoever that information was conveyed, the question betrayed gross ignorance of the caste system of India. There had appeared before them the precious Mr. Gokhale, who had, under the guidance of the hon. member for Banff, defiled the threshold of this glorious building. (Laughter.) The Natus, he knew to his certain knowledge, belonged, like Mr. Gokhale, to a section of people who were called reformers, whose endeavours in the line of social reform were perfectly laudable. They were hampered by a great many hardships of which hon. members could have no possible conception. They were afflicted by a system of child marriages, and the prevention of widows' marriages, and a great many other customs from which the reformers tried to free themselves by relaxing the bonds of caste. The Natus had consequently no rigorous caste observances to keep. It happened that one of them was taken to the plague hospital, which irritated these men, who were very powerful, because, as the hon. member for Mayo said, they were very rich, and one of them being called upon to subject himself to the rules and regulations laid down for the arrest of the plague, had led them to behave in a manner which had caused a suspicion of their being implicated in certain serious operations. That was the explanation of the importance attached to the caste question by hon. members opposite. With respect to the arrest of these Natus, the hon. member was in error as to the Regulation that was acted upon; it was the Act of 1827 which empowered the Government of Bombay to take action, in consonance with the provisions of law, which had been acted upon, and not the Regulation of 1817 as was mistakenly supposed. Dealing with certain references which had been made to himself, he said that when, on the inspection of certain native newspapers, he found an astonishing report of the proceedings of a meeting in Poona, he felt it to be his duty, as a member of the House, as a lover of India—(cheers)—and as a loyal subject of Her Majesty—(cheers)—to ask whether the local officials, who did not know the vernacular, were aware that such seditious utterances had been made before large gatherings of students and ignorant men. That had been the extent of his crime. He had been charged with being disloyal to the interests of India, but he pointed out that the men whose cause was being advocated by hon. members opposite were not the men of whom the people of India were proud. (Cheers.) Not a man of them represented the public feeling of India, in spite of the assertion of the hon. member for Banffshire to the contrary. Those whom the hon. baronet was strangely befriending were only a few hundred, or at most a few thousand, men out of the myriad population of India; and it was his duty both as an advocate of the true interests of India and as a loyal citizen of the British empire to do all he could, even at the risk of personal sacrifice, to expose those currents of sedition which were making havoc of the future prosperity and safety of our Indian empire. (Cheers.) Large masses of natives themselves and many native editors cried down this seditious teaching, and called loudly for the enforcement of measures to prevent it in future. He had numerous letters and extracts to prove this, but would content himself with reading a short extract from a letter which he had just received from one who had been chairman of the Municipal Corporation

of Bombay. "Here," said the writer, referring to the Poona murders, "is another sad example of the loyalty and devotion of the Congress Brahmins of Poona. A very sad tragedy was enacted by some dastardly and cowardly fellows soon after twelve midnight, after all had enjoyed the jubilee celebrations to their hearts' content." Turning to the Irish members, he suggested they should confine their attention either to Ireland or India. They could not look after both. If they choose to look after India, what would be Ireland's gain would be India's loss. (Cheers.) He might next mention one or two events to show hon. members that the people of India had much reason to be grateful for the blessings conferred on them in the last sixty years, and to rejoice on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee. In 1837 was settled a big struggle which fixed the fate of India to a large extent with regard to its future development. A controversy had been raging between the Orientalists and the Occidentalists to determine whether the system of education in India should be established on the basis of a Western education or a purely Oriental education. That long controversy, conducted with great ability, was settled in the year 1837, by its being decided that in future the education of India should proceed on Western lines. (Hear, hear.) He thought it was in the same year that the cruel system of suttee, under which widows were burnt on the funeral pyre, was abolished under the influence, and owing to the influence of, British rule. (Cheers.) In a few years more slavery was abolished from India. In 1837, as now, plague and pestilence had taken hold of certain portions of the land; but the distress inflicted on the country by these calamities was not met in the effectual manner in which it had been met to-day. (Hear, hear.) There were a few events among many others which would convince anybody that India was justified in rejoicing, as she did rejoice, in the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of Her Majesty's coronation. (Cheers.) The lucid explanation which the noble lord had given in regard to the accounts of the past year, and the Budget for this year, invited comment, but he could not at that time of the night venture to take the House into details. All he should content himself with doing was to express his satisfaction at the fact that, while the country had passed through the throes of such dire calamities, her pecuniary credit and fiscal arrangements had not been submitted to any great convulsion. The best guage of that was the good position which the Government loans maintained both in this country and in India. (Hear, hear.) He thought that with regard to the railway estimates which the noble lord had put before the House, one might express great satisfaction, because it had been proved that railways, after all, had been the best agencies in arresting the ravages, not only of famine, but even of plague, because without the railways the people could not have been transported from one centre to another, which was necessary to be done in order to take them away from the plague-stricken districts, and he, therefore, had to express his satisfaction at learning that the railway programme of the Government of India was not to be disturbed. He had, however, one complaint to make, and it was this, that Bombay had been badly treated in the distribution of grants, because the Government of India had not apportioned to Bombay the fair share of the railway works which it needed. One or two main schemes which might have connected Bombay with Upper India without break of guage had been put off for a long time. He trusted, however, that the noble lord, on reconsideration, would see his way to making such amendments as would furnish Bombay with those resources in the shape of lines of communication by railway which she sorely needed, and the want of which, he believed, had been represented to him through the Bombay Government and the Government of India. The feeder lines which might be legitimately encouraged, as native capital was available for them, and their success was no longer a matter of doubt after the profitable working of the Ahmedabad Prantej line. Before passing to a much-debated question, he thought he was entitled to say a word with regard to the question of irrigation, which had been started by previous speakers. He expressed his deep sympathy with the idea of carrying on a large system of canals for one main reason, and that was this, that the most of the outlay on whatever labour they bestowed upon the construction of canals, and whatever implements were used in their construction, would come back to the people of India, and not much of it would go abroad. At the same time, although he was in perfect sympathy with the motives which had prompted the arguments so ably put by the hon. member opposite, he would, perhaps, be glad to hear a very competent opinion with regard to the difficulty of proceeding with irrigation works, and the authority to whom he referred was an able native gentleman who had been engaged in the work of administration for a great many years, and who could not be accused of any partiality for the building of railways as a means of putting money into the pockets of English or European manufacturers. His opinion was this, that while canals, where successful, were more efficacious as tending to prevent the recurrence of famine by multiplying the area of cultivation, nevertheless, there were difficulties in the way of irrigation only too well known locally, and, in fact, the construction of useful canals in by far the greater portion of India was impossible. He mentioned this fact to show that if the suggestions of hon. members were not accepted by the responsible authorities who had to conduct the administration of India, it must not be put down to want of sympathy, but rather to a more critical knowledge of the subject than hon. members themselves possessed. There was another matter on which he should like to dwell with some emphasis—namely, the treatment of British Indian subjects in the South African colonies.

The Speaker: Order, order! This does not arise on the question before the House. It is a South African, not an Indian question.

Sir M. Bhownaggree said he would defer what he wished to say on the subject to a more favourable occasion, and proceeded to quote testimony of an eminent Hindu gentleman to the efficacy of the measures adopted by the Government of India to meet the ravages of famine. As to the feeling of the Muhammadans, he had in his hand a printed letter from a Muhammadan, referring to recent speeches by some socialist speakers and by Mr. Naoroji, and declaring that they would be treasonable if they were not absurd, and expressing the hope that the English people would not sympathise with such wind and bluster. With the exception of a few obstinate and perverse minds—(cheers)—it was patent by this time to the world that the measures adopted by the supreme Government and the subordinate Governments of India to arrest the ravages of the famine had been most efficacious, and had successfully combated a disaster in such a complete manner as had never before been experienced in the history of India. (Cheers.) As to the plague operations, they had heard till they were sick of a Hindu gentleman, a Professor of a private Poona College, who had, in the words of the hon. member for Banffshire, become a patriot by devoting 20 years of his life to the work of education at a very small salary. This Mr. Gokhale was brought over to give evidence before the Royal Commission on the grievances of India, and he was asked to say what he knew about the plague operations in Poona. The hon. member for Banffshire had apologised to the House for his grave mistake in that connexion, and he should pass the incident by if the apology had been at all commensurate with the vast mischief for which he had been responsible. (Cheers.) The hon. member had been 15 or 20 years in Poona in more than one judicial capacity, and he was sorry to say that the hon. member had been a Judge of the High Court for a time, in which position he was not confirmed. He mentioned this to show why he regarded the blunders which had been made by the hon. member as perfectly inexcusable. When Mr. Gokhale had told his tale, he was challenged to prove his assertions, and there were men who knew India and its Government, and the character of the English officials, and who refused to believe these assertions. Thereupon the hon. member for Banffshire came forward with a testimony as to Mr. Gokhale's character. He said that he had known him for years, and that he knew him to bear the highest character for integrity. When a responsible member of Parliament undertook to give such a certificate, and in such circumstances, he ought to be more careful. (Cheers.) In his confession to the Government of Bombay, this Mr. Gokhale said:—Private letters confirmed my opinion, and the circumstances which followed the murders left no doubt in my mind that punishment swift and terrible was descending upon that unhappy city, and the brand of general disloyalty was being placed on the brow of my race. That was the explanation. Mr. Gokhale was afraid that punishment would follow these murders, and in order to avoid it he made all these statements without believing them. Since it had been known that the Government were going to adopt certain proceedings in consequence of the murders of Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Ayerst,

the hon. member for Banffshire had begun to bombard the Secretary of State for India with questions. The hon. member was not troubled on account of the murders of his fellow-countrymen—(cheers); he was not agitated on account of the sorrowing parents who had been bereaved of their sons in a far-off land. No; all the hon. member's tenderness, apprehension, and anxiety were aroused, not for the relatives of the victims of this dastardly crime, but lest the Government of India should take any measures which would insure the punishment of the offenders, and the prevention of such crimes in future. (Cheers.) Was any of the testimony for which the hon. member for Banffshire vouch reliable. (Cries of "Oh!" and hear, hear!) The hon. member had taken advantage of his position in that great chamber. (Laughter, and cries of "Order!")

The SPEAKER said that the hon. member would be in order in replying to what the hon. member for Banffshire had said with regard to the outrages, but he had no right to make this an opportunity for entering upon matters which were merely personal to the hon. baronet.

Sir M. BHOWNAGGREE contended that the hon. member's apology to that House did not wipe away the great error committed by him in putting such blind reliance upon the statements of a man who had confessed that he had perjured himself. (Cries of "Oh!" and cheers.)

Sir W. WEDDERBURN rose to make an explanation. Professor Gokhale being here as a witness before the Royal Commission, he thought it right to give members an opportunity of hearing what a gentleman who had recently come from Poona had to say. Professor Gokhale came here accredited by a large number of his fellow-countrymen, and he still maintained that he was a gentleman bearing the highest character for integrity. Professor Gokhale made a great mistake in allowing himself to be misled by his correspondents. He did not say that he had any knowledge of these alleged facts himself. He (Sir W. Wedderburn) had never said that he believed them. (Cries of "Oh!") All he had done was to give this gentleman an opportunity of stating his views.

Sir M. BHOWNAGGREE denied that Professor Gokhale was sent to this country as the representative of a large number of people, and asked why the names of the professor's correspondents were withheld. He was not entitled to keep their names up his sleeve. (Laughter.) As long as these letters were not forthcoming they were entitled to believe that they were merely fictitious. (Hear, hear.) There had been forged memorials and signatures, and these letters might be forgeries also. He had now done with the hon. baronet—(hear, hear)—and he turned to the subject of the amendment that stood in his name. He could not at that hour venture to trouble the House with the statistics and arguments in support of it. Nor was it necessary for him to do so, after the remarks of the noble lord in favour of greater attention being directed in future to industrial education. There were thirty-seven millions of manufactured imports into India as against four millions of manufactured exports, barring cotton and jute fabrics. The Government fifty years ago established a system of education which it was hoped would fit the people to proceed in the path of progress and prosperity by enabling them to develop the material resources lying at their own doors. But experience had shown that those expectations were mistaken. That system of education, established by Sir Charles Wood, had driven the people into the learned professions, which were immensely overstocked, while the smallest articles of daily use and consumption were supplied by foreign countries. The time had, therefore, come when the Government of India must take some action in order to develop that industrial prosperity of which India stood so much in need. In view of the seditious teaching of the vernacular press, the Government of India were also bound to investigate how that press was conducted, what were the qualifications and capabilities of those who conducted it, and why it was to a large extent turned into an instrument of sedition, blackmailing, and intimidation. (Hear, hear.) There were, no doubt, a number of papers which were conducted ably and in a spirit of loyalty, like the *Rast Goftar*, the *Indian Spectator*, the *Hindu Patriot*, the *Moslem Chronicle*, and others; but they were very few compared to the large bulk of low journals which were in the hands of ignorant men and others who bore no goodwill to their rulers. He hoped, in conclusion, that the Secretary of State and his colleagues would strengthen the hands of the Viceroy and other administrators of our Indian Empire to enable them to deal with the difficulties that had arisen there with firmness; and that the House would give them all that support which they needed for overcoming those obstacles he had indicated as tending to hinder the progress of her contented and docile people towards the development which it was the great aim of British rule to secure to them. (Cheers.)

SIR A. SCOBLE.

Sir ANDREW SCOBLE said he found himself unable to agree with any of the resolutions which had been placed on the Paper in regard to India; and the speeches which had been delivered went more in the direction of offering advice to the Government of India, which they did not require, than of making any practical suggestions. There could be no doubt that this Jubilee year had been fraught with disaster to India. Some of these disasters were the act of God. Famine and pestilence could not be prevented by human wisdom, though human wisdom might do and had done most effectual work in diminishing their ravages. (Hear, hear.) The frontier expeditions now on foot were in the ordinary day's work of the Government of India, and there was no need to dwell upon them, except to say that the British people appreciated the loyalty and devotion of the Indian troops and the rapidity and energy with which the Government had met the sudden calls made upon them. (Hear, hear.) He desired to associate himself with the praise bestowed by the Secretary of State on the Viceroy, who had shown a readiness and resource, a courage and a promptitude which entitled him to the respect, admiration, and gratitude of every British subject. (Hear, hear.) He regretted very much the attacks that had been made on the British soldiers engaged in the task of arresting the plague. There was no doubt from the evidence received that they had discharged their duty with the utmost patience, mercy and kindness. (Hear, hear.) And there was no ground whatever for saying that any British soldier had misconducted himself. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the case mentioned on the other side of the House, the persons concerned were not British soldiers. One was an inferior police officer, and one in an inferior grade of the medical service. His hon. friend the member for Flintshire, whose benevolence everyone recognised, had spoken in warm commendation of the steps taken by the Government to repair the injury done by the famine, and to stamp out the plague. He associated himself with the hon. member's suggestion that it would be a graceful and desirable thing if the Government of this country were to come to the assistance of the Government of India by a substantial money grant. The famine was not anywhere near at an end, and its after effects had to be dealt with, and he would like very much to see a handsome sum placed at the disposal of the Government of India for the purchase of seed and cattle, in order to enable the cultivators of the land to plough and sow their lands. (Hear, hear.) He believed that a grant from this Parliament would have the effect the member for Flintshire anticipated, and would produce an outburst of gratitude from the cultivators of the land which would do much to strengthen British rule in India. The hon. member for Banffshire had urged the Government not to proceed with severity in the presence of circumstances with regard to the disturbances that had taken place. Had there been any severity on the part of the Government? (Hear, hear.) They were told there had been failures in the system of relief given by the Government in famine camps and works. That was the fault of inferior native agencies. Surely that ought not to be charged against the Government. The fact was there was too much anxiety to displace European agency in India. Unfortunately in that country dependence had to be placed on inferior native agencies, which constantly frustrated and brought to naught the benevolent designs of the Government. He had never been in favour of coercive measures against the Press in India, but what was the case? They found that in India newspapers were often established, not to be intelligent organs of public opinion, but to be devoted simply to obtaining blackmail from the more respectable members of their own community. The hon. member had said that the present law was equal to dealing with Press offences. The Government were now going to try. The question was now before the Bombay High Court, and that Court would decide in due course of law. In regard to native industries, no doubt there was a great economical as well as a political revolution going

on in India. The Government was not blind to what was going on. Still, the situation was one which could not be disposed of by legislation. He was sorry that the hon. member for Hoxton intended to raise the old controversy in regard to that form of disease which unhappily had been so prevalent amongst British troops. Statistics recently obtained proved most clearly that the freer the hand given to the Government of India in that matter the better it would be for the morality of the British Army, for the health of the Army, for the people of India, and for the women of England. (Hear, hear.) In 1895, under the pressure of the opinion of this House, an Act was passed restricting the power of the Government of India to make regulations with regard to this form of contagious disease. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir George White, speaking the other day in the Viceroy's Council, supplied the strongest argument for the repeal of that Act, for he said:—"The statistics of 1895 are in themselves irrefutable proof of the necessity of stronger legislation. In that year, out of 68,331 men in cantonments, the admissions into hospital for venereal diseases were no less than 36,681, or 5·369 per 1,000. Of these cases 22,702 were syphilis. The ratio for primary disease has increased 137 per cent. since 1887, and that for secondary disease no less than 188 per cent. in the same period. Secondary syphilis was in 1895 four times more prevalent than it was in 1873." The Royal College of Physicians, who might be taken as an unprejudiced authority, stated in their Report:—"About 13,000 soldiers return to England from India every year, and of these, in 1894, over 60 per cent. had suffered from some form of venereal disease. These figures are quoted as showing more forcibly than words can the risk of contamination, not only to the present population of this country, but also to its future generations. Of these men a number die, or, remaining invalids, are more or less incapacitated from earning their own livelihood, and thus become a burden on the rates." The moral aspects of the question had never been lost sight of by the Government of India. They had carefully desired to give the soldier such employment and recreation as might minimise his temptations, but at the same time a Government which had any regard for the population under its sway ought not to hesitate for a moment to apply what it conceived to be the most effectual remedy for the existing state of things. (Cheers.)

Sir H. H. Fowler.

Sir Henry Fowler said that, whatever difference of opinion there might be as to the number of members present to-night as compared with the occasions of preceding Indian Budget debates, it would be generally agreed that the debate had been unusually lively. But the note to-night had been, he thought, on a minor key, and although there had been no disposition on the part of those who had taken part in the debate to indulge in any unnecessary apprehension, or in anything approaching to panic, there had been expressed a dissatisfaction as to the state of things in India, which, he thought, proceeded, in the main, from misapprehension more than from well-grounded fear. (Hear, hear.) At the onset he wished to say that the statement of the noble lord was not only distinguished by great ability, but couched in appropriate conciliatory and statesmanlike terms. (Cheers.) There was nothing provocative in the noble lord's speech; it was a fair and candid statement as to the difficulties of the Indian Government, and the opposing elements which seemed to have accumulated month after month with increasing force. He might say that from both sides of the House they tendered him their cordial appreciation of the manner in which he had discharged his task—(cheers)—and they also joined with the noble lord in expressing their great admiration of the conduct of the Viceroy. (Cheers.) Those only who, like the Secretary of State, had had weekly communications with Lord Elgin, could fully appreciate those qualities of courage, firmness, wisdom, and level-headedness which Lord Elgin had shown during the whole of his administration; and it must be gratifying to him to know that in this particular crisis he had the confidence, not only of the present Government, but of that which preceded it, and also of the House of Commons. (Cheers.) Of course, this Budget debate centred round the question of famine. This was the famine year, this was the calamity of India, and he thought they had not yet in that debate done full justice to the Indian Government, and to the administration which had been going on since the famine broke out. Judging from some of the speeches to which they had listened they might be led to suppose that in some way or other the Government of India had been responsible for the famine, and that the economic laws in force in India since the British rule commenced had created a state of things which never existed in India before. But the history of India showed a long succession of famines during a succession of centuries, and although the present was one of the most terrible famines in some of its aspects, yet, nevertheless, the Government of India had dealt with it with unexampled vigour and success. (Hear, hear.) Governments had enough to bear upon their shoulders without attributing blame to them for want of rain, and the cause of the Indian famine was not the Indian Government, the British Government, or British rule in India, but the meteorological result, the symptoms of which the noble lord was aware of when he addressed the House last year. The bad monsoon was the cause of famine, and he thought they might now confidently hope that there would be a good monsoon this year. He would venture to put before the House the protective and administrative means which could and ought to be undertaken to grapple with this terrible calamity, which the Government could not foresee or prevent, but which they might by wise administration possibly mitigate. The House was aware that after the last famine a Famine Commission was appointed, and some of the most competent men who could possibly be selected thoroughly exhausted the whole question of famine protection and prevention. His English friends must excuse him when he said that although the remedies they propounded were no doubt the result of great ability and research he preferred the deliberate judgment of accomplished experts who had been acquainted with India all their lives, and who, with the assistance also of English experts, in that well-known Report recommended to the Government what measures they thought ought to be adopted—recommendations which he thought the events of that year had proved to be correct. Judging from some of the speeches, it might be thought that nothing had been done in regard to irrigation in India, but a great deal had been done before 1877, and a great deal had been done since 1877. The major canals and great works since 1877 had received an extension of 14,000 miles, and an increase of 3½ million of acres in the area of irrigation, at an expense of 130 million of rupees, and the minor canals had received a corresponding extension at a cost of 30 millions. Scarcely less remarkable was the enormous development in that time of well irrigation; wherever there was water and wells could be dug, wells had been dug. But it must be remembered that only one-eleventh of the whole area of India was available for well irrigation. It must also be remembered that if there was to be development in the way of canals the water supply from the river must be tapped at a point where it was sufficient, and it must not be taken at a point where it would create a swamp, or else they would have malaria instead of famine. Irrigation had, on the whole, been an advantageous investment for the Indian Government. The point now was not the desirability of irrigation, but whether the Government had not reached a point when they should proceed by degrees. If the Secretary for India was satisfied on the subject he was sure he would give all the help he could. At present the irrigated area of India was capable of feeding 120,000,000 of the people. Therefore one-half of the population of India was provided for; and these works had been carried out by the much-abused Government of India since 1877. On the subject of railways he entirely sympathised with the views of the Secretary for India with regard to railway stations. In 1877 the country was mapped out into areas of food supply with a railway provision for each block; and, according to the calculation of the Government of India, a line 300 miles long, serving a tract twenty-five miles broad on either side, could protect from famine an area of 15,000 miles, and they drew up a scheme for 20,000 miles of railway. Of this total 9,000 miles were already made, and the mileage constructed between 1877 and April, 1896, was 11,409. One half of this was specifically recommended by the Famine Commission. There were now in India two great protections against famine—increased irrigation and improved railway communication. As to the administrative mechanism by which the Government brought to bear all its resources to deal with famine, it had been justly remarked in the press that the famine code constructed by the Commission of 1877 was scarcely less perfect than the code on board a P. and O. steamer in case of an out-

break of fire. One of the things hon. members should consider who advocated interference with the existing land tenure of India was that the Government was the great landlord in India, and in the present Estimates it would be found that the Secretary for India had had to make large deductions for allowances the Government had made to their tenants for rent which would never be collected or paid. The Government had, moreover, made large advances to enable irrigation works to be carried out. Respecting the remarks of the hon. member for Flintshire, no one would minimise the suffering that prevailed in India. Suffering was inseparable from famine, but the recent suffering was a very small part of the suffering that existed in 1877, or that would have existed if the protective works had not been constructed. As he understood the Secretary for India, there was a subsistence allowance to every man, woman, and child who went on the relief works. Could our own poor relief do more than that? When we had a government grappling in this way with a great difficulty, they deserved, not adverse criticism, but all the help that could be given to them. (Ministerial cheers.) The hon. member for Donegal, referring to the Famine Relief Fund, informed the House that large sums of money had been diverted from the purposes of the relief of famine, and that the Indian Government were not in possession of the funds they ought to be in order to meet the famine emergency. If the hon. member had read the statement of the noble lord opposite he would see that in the seventeen years in which the famine fund had been in existence £24,215,000 had been raised for the purposes of that fund, appropriated out of revenue; that £6,000,000 had been given away in relief; that £13,000,000 had been spent on protective works—which he thought were an admirable famine insurance fund—and last of all that the balance of between five and six millions had been applied in payment of debt. Therefore, at the present moment the Government of India had paid off debt, out of this famine fund, of nearly £6,000,000. (Hear, hear.) That meant that they might go into the market to-morrow and borrow £6,000,000 which might be necessary to make up any deficit of the last two years, and yet the financial position of India would not be one whit the worse than it otherwise would have been. (Cheers.) It would have been a silly financial operation to have accumulated £6,000,000 in gold and kept it locked up in Calcutta or Bombay, but what the Government did was to pay off debt with it, which was then carrying 4 and 4½ per cent. interest, get rid of that interest and charge, and now, if they wanted it, they could borrow that amount at 2½ per cent. interest. (Cheers.) He was glad to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer present, as he wished to allude to a question—namely, that of an Imperial contribution to the revenue of India out of the Imperial funds in connection with this great calamity. His hon. friend behind him had pointed out what they all knew—the great wealth of this country and the poverty of India. He was not at present going to trouble the House with any arguments of his own, as he was quite sure they were familiar to the minds of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues: but he wanted to call the attention of the House to the speech of one of the greatest landowners in India, a most loyal and distinguished subject of the Queen, the Mahârâjá of Darbhanga, than whom no one could speak with greater authority on a question like this in the Indian Government. He said:—"Our financial prospect being what it is, and the imposition of further taxes being impossible, I think we may appeal with some confidence for a subsidy for the Home Government. I make this appeal not only as a matter of favour, but also as an act of justice." The Mahârâjá proceeded to argue the question now under the consideration of a Royal Commission with reference to the military expenditure of India, and he also referred to the controversy, happily over, which related to the charges for the Indian troops last year. Having disposed of these questions, he used these words:—"So long the burden has been exclusively borne by the Indian taxpayer. In time of his need he may, therefore, fairly appeal to the Home Government for a subsidy, and I am sure he will not appeal in vain to the generous English nation; for his demand is based on considerations of justice and equity. For England in the past he has made at least some pecuniary sacrifices, and to the English Government he may appeal for help in a time of pestilence and famine. I trust your lordship's Government will see their way to press this view of the matter upon the attention of Her Majesty's ministers in England. The whole of India feels deeply grateful for the magnificent way in which the people of England have unanimously come forward to afford relief to the famine stricken peasantry of this country in a year like this. What I now request is that the English Government should supplement the good work that has been performed by the generous English public. Any concession of this sort, in a year like this, will, I feel sure, not only be regarded with feelings of the deepest gratitude by the thinking portion of the Indian public, but, what is more, it must go a long way to bind down the two nations in closer bonds of union and love." (Cheers.) Those were the sentiments of one of the most distinguished subjects of the Queen in India, and one whose words, he believed, would have weight with the Government. (Cheers.) With reference to the plague, he thought the Government were quite right to stamp it out at all costs. No risks that they could run could outweigh the terrible danger which would have accrued to India —to her commerce and to her prosperity—if that plague had been allowed to go on unchecked. (Cheers.) There had been a controversy as to what Lord Sandhurst called "ridiculous, ruthless, and heartless charges." He knew Lord Sandhurst well enough to say he would not believe such charges until they were proved up to the hilt and by evidence beyond dispute. (Cheers.) He would not take hearsay slander against Lord Sandhurst or the Government of India. (Cheers.) The whole case broke down, and by a concurrence of testimony which was conclusive, it had been shown that there had been the greatest consideration and the greatest delicacy manifested by the whole of the officials; that they had the assistance of ladies, of medical men, of English officers, and of English soldiers. (Cheers.) He had no sympathy with those slighting remarks which had been made on the English soldiers, and he did not understand, coming from some gentlemen who were specially representative, as he was himself, of the working man, why these slights should be cast upon them, because the English soldier was the English working man, and his experience of the English working man was that he was not in the habit of insulting women in the manner which had been suggested. (Cheers.) He rejoiced that Lord Sandhurst had completely vindicated himself, as his friends knew he would, and with a courage worthy of himself and of his father, one of the most distinguished men in the service of the Government of India, had taken the whole of the responsibility upon his own shoulders, not leaving it to his subordinates. (Hear, hear.) He rejoiced that in a crisis of this sort Lord Sandhurst, with his great knowledge of hospital work in London, had been at the head of the Government of Bombay and—this was a test of his work —had stamped out the plague in Poona. (Cheers.) There was at an earlier period of the evening an Amendment, now disposed of, raising the question of the introduction of the British Constitution into India. (Laughter.) He would only make one remark on this extraordinary proposal, and it would be rather a paradoxical observation. There was no such place as India. India was a geographical term to describe the gathering together, the tying together, under British rule of a vast variety of countries. There was greater difference between the countries which formed the Indian Empire than between the different countries of Europe. (Hear, hear.) A distinguished author on this subject had said "that Scotland was more like Spain than Bengal was like the Punjab." (Hear, hear.) In India we have fifty different languages—(hear, hear,)—every variety of race—(hear, hear,) —contending religions, every element of hostile collision, long-standing racial prejudices, and the bitterness of religious feuds, and into the midst of these elements the British Constitution was to be introduced. (Laughter.) The consequences of attempting to bring into India a representative body similar to the House of Commons would be anarchy, civil war, the abrogation of British rule, and the return to military despotism. (Hear, hear.) No; the story of India was one this country need not be ashamed of. A great deal of fault might be found with the Government of India, but the story of the Government of India by Great Britain was one of the most wondrous stories in all our history. (Cheers.) There was no parallel to it in the history of our own or other countries. Of course, mistakes had been made; you cannot govern 300 millions of people by human agency without great mistakes. Call them if you like great blunders, but the British Government had taught India and taught Asia what was not known there before—impartial justice and the equality of all creeds and classes before the law. (Cheers.) It had protected the Indian

people, and the people knew that their lives and property were safe. As an Englishman he was prouder of what this country had done in India than what had been done at home. There was no dishonour to us in our rule in India, and he trusted that the Government of India, supported by the House as he knew it was, supported by the people of this country as he knew it was, would go on improving and doing more and more for the people of India. (Cheers.) If his hon. friend would read the history of the progress of India, he would find a great many of his illusions vanish, and he would recognise what the British Government had done for the people of India, and in this year, this terrible year of famine, plague, and earthquake, he would learn that by machinery devised by English statesmen and carried out by English civil and military officers, work had been done of which England has every reason to be proud. (Cheers.) He could not allow the Session to close with a Debate such as this without uttering some words of encouragement to our Indian officers, and without a word of protest against expressions of doubt, depression, and dismay. We had had difficulties to contend with, and we had met them with courage, teaching the Indian people how to surmount such difficulties, and though a year of supreme disaster had been this Jubilee for India, yet he hoped it would leave a story of which England and India might both be proud. (Cheers.)

MR. JAMES STUART.

MR. JAMES STUART said the brief remarks with which he would trouble the House at this late hour would be in the nature of a reply to the hon. member on the other side of the House who very erroneously anticipated the character of the speech he was about to make. In the first place, the hon. member fell into the mistake—a common mistake—in respect to what the Indian Government had done. When the Secretary of State sent his despatch to India, it would be remembered he requested regulations to be made for bringing the special diseases referred to under the same regulations as other diseases, and he laid down certain restrictions which he was insistent, and rightly and honourably so, that the Indian Government should obey. He, for one, abstained from bringing this subject forward in the House at that time because his belief that the restrictions would disappear was a matter of suspicion. He believed it because precisely the same order, accompanied by precisely the same restrictions, had been given by Lord Cross eight years ago. It would be observed that in the correspondence laid on the Table of the House the Government of India said it was their intention to repeal the Cantonment Act of 1895, but there was no statement and no quotation given as to what that Cantonment Act provided. When that statement was made, even the best-informed organs of public opinion in this country made a mistake as to what that Act contained. He would quote only one, *The Lancet*, which said: A Bill has been introduced into the Viceregal Legislative Council repealing the Cantonment Acts of 1895, and untying the hands of the Indian Government by giving it the same powers in repect of venereal disease that it has in the case of other infectious and contagious disorders. The *Times*, in a leading article, went further, and said that the action of the Indian Goverment was simply empowering the bringing of person affected with the disease under the same regulations as persons affected with cholera, small-pox, etc. Had that been the only effect of repealing the Act, he should not have brought the question forward at the present time. That Act was a very short one. It consisted of one clause, and that clause of three lines. Here was the whole Act: "Provided that no such rule shall contain any regulation enjoining or permitting any compulsory or periodical examination of any woman by medical officers or others for the purpose of ascertaining whether she is or is not suffering from any venereal disease or is not fit for prostitution, or any regulation for the licensing or special registration of prostitutes, or giving legal sanction to the practice of prostitution in any cantonment." That Act did not hinder the treatment of venereal disease similar to any other disease. It simply prohibited the practice which the Secretary of State ordered should not be carried out. Here was what the Secretary of State said in his Despatch: "There must be nothing which can be represented as an encouragement to vice; there must be no registration of prostitutes other than that which is, or should be, enforced for all the inhabitants of the cantonment; no granting of licences to practise prostitution, and there must be no compulsory and periodical examination of women." He wanted to know whether the Government, who were responsible to this House for the action of the Indian Government, approved or disapproved of the repeal of the Act? If they disapproved they were bound to prevent its repeal; if they approved, what became of the restrictions? Did the Government or did they not approve or disapprove of the action which he had stated? He did not want to bring forward any moral argument; he wished to appeal to plain matter of fact. The hon. gentleman opposite argued in favour of the practical re-establishment of the same system which had been so utterly and hopelessly a failure. He spoke of the increase of disease in the Indian Army since 1873 until now. There had been a great increase but it took place while the regulations it was proposed to re-establish existed just as much as since the regulations had been taken away. It had not been stated, moreover, with reference to the increase before their repeal, and during their existence, and also since the repeal of the regulations that in the home Army disease had largely diminished. If they looked through the various stations in India also, and the various regiments in India, they would find as between station and station, whether the regulation existed or not, and between regiment and regiment, there were far greater differences than existed under the regulation system. In one station there was frequently, whether regulation or not, three and four times the amount of disease that there was in another station. There was, for example, 50 per cent. more disease in the Bengal command than there was in the Punjab command. One of the reasons why he objected to the re-imposition of these regulations was that they had failed—as the Army Sanitary Commission had for twenty years repeatedly shown—to accomplish the end they were designed to accomplish. The extraordinary difference between station and station and between regiment and regiment to which he had referred, gave the key partly to the position and character of the proposals which he and others had already laid before the Secretary of State. No one recognised more than they the virtue of medical treatment. But they said that to effectually deal with this matter it was necessary to strike at the vice which caused the disease; they must amend the scandalous environment into which, to their disgrace, they had plunged young soldiers in India, and that environment was intensified in its present unfortunate position by the existence of such regulation as had been re-imposed—in saying which he said no more than had been reported for many years by the Army Sanitary Commission. His object had been a simple one—to make this one point clear; that the Indian Government had made a giant stride; that there had arisen a new situation, a situation created by—though he believed it was not intended or contemplated in—the Secretary of State's Despatch; and that the repeal in India of the Act of 1895 was a warning to those in this country who desired to prevent a repetition of the abuses which shocked the whole nation in 1888 and to those who regarded the provisions which were prevented by the Act of 1895 as profoundly immoral, and their enforcement as a huge national mistake. (Hear, hear.)

LORD G. HAMILTON.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON said he had no right to speak except by the leave of the House, but as the hon. gentleman had made a personal appeal to him in reference to the action of the Indian Government, the House would perhaps allow him to answer the hon. gentleman. (Hear, hear.) He could do so in two or three minutes. He did not propose to go into every matter raised by the hon. gentleman. Whether or not the Government were wise in endeavouring to take measures in order to stop the terrible growth of this disease, he was quite content that their action should be challenged, and condemned if they did not bring conclusive evidence to justify it. But he adhered to everything in his despatch. He thought the hon. gentleman and his friends had not accurately grasped what the intention of the Indian Government was in repealing the Act of 1895. That Act was passed after the home authorities had declined to allow the Indian Government to treat venereal disease as a contagious disease. Since then, however, it had been decided to apply to it all such regulations as were applicable to contagious diseases; therefore the House could understand that an Act which was passed to carry out one state of things was not applicable to exactly the reverse state of things. While preparing the despatch which he wrote to the Indian Government, it was not clear to him that the phraseology of

the Act of 1895 was such as to prevent the regulations that were proposed. But the Indian Government in their reply showed that if the Act was not repealed the medical officers would not be able to carry out the regulations they had submitted for approval. Those regulations were entirely in accord with his despatch, and did not go an inch beyond it, and as the Indian Government wished to repeal the Act he gave his consent. But if the hon. gentleman thought they were going to take any action that was inconsistent with the despatch, he was in error. All they wanted was to give the regulations fair play by removing from the Indian statute book an enactment which did not allow of the proper and effectual operation of these new regulations. (Hear, hear.)

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS had given notice of his intention to move: "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that in future no Indian prince or chief shall be deposed on the ground of maladministration or misconduct until the fact of such maladministration or misconduct shall have been established to the satisfaction of a public tribunal which shall command the confidence alike of the Government and of the princes and chiefs of India." He said he would not attempt to deal with the subject at such an hour. But he was sure that the establishment of some such court was really needed. If such an independent tribunal were set up it would result not in a loss, but in a gain to the moral power of the British Government.

MR. R. J. PRICE.

MR. R. J. PRICE who had a notice on the Paper to move: "That, in the opinion of this House, the present famine has shown that there is a necessity for further means of transport in India, and that special attention should be given to the subject of irrigation and to the construction of waterways in suitable districts," said that the battering which he had endured from his right hon. friend the member for East Wolverhampton and from the Secretary of State for India had been meted out under a misapprehension. The motion of which he had given notice was drawn in accordance with a memorial to the noble lord in favour of increased irrigation, and signed by hon. members on both sides of the House. Neither memorial nor motion implied any censure on the Government of India. The view of those who signed the memorial was that if the food which existed in India could have been carried to the famine districts, there would have been no famine. He heartily approved of the system of railways so ably carried on by the Indian Government, but side by side with that system should come a system of irrigation. No doubt most of the more obvious and necessary works had already been carried out. But his right hon. friend the member for East Wolverhampton had said that in his opinion irrigation works ought to pay some rate of interest on the invested capital. Interest was desirable, but it was not the only advantage resulting from irrigation works. They gave an increased land revenue, and were an insurance against famine. He had an important letter on this point from Mr. J. A. Bourdillon, Commissioner of the Patna Division, Bengal. The letter was written in January, and without any idea of this debate: "The Kharif (autumn) season of 1896 has been one of extreme pressure on the Sone Canals. The average rainfall from August to October is 23 inches, but in 1896 it was only 11 inches in the area commanded by the Sone Canals. From July 21 to August 21 showers scarce—quite useless for the busiest transplanting time. It was only in the irrigated tracts that any transplanting till after August 21 could be carried on. The Kharif crops are sown in July and August. From July 21 to August 31 demand from the Sone Canals was very great. Area actually irrigated in the past Kharif season, 312,000 acres, exceeding the previous maximum by 32,000 acres. The rice crop, worth 30 to 40 rupees per acre in ordinary years, is this year (1896) worth more than 50 rupees. Crop saved by the Sone Canal is worth some 150 lakhs of rupees to the rayats, and probably more. The entire cost of constructing the Sone Canals was 270 lakhs of rupees. Pressure of Kharif season is past. Now the demand is for the rabi (winter) crop. In 1873-74 there was scarcity in Behar—no canals there. Compare 1896-97 with 1873-74, and see the difference the canals make. This year 312,000 acres of crops matured by Sone Canals for the Kharif season will place 60 lakhs of maunds of 'paddy' (unhusked rice), equal to 40 lakhs of maunds of cleaned rice in the hands of the people. If there is a failure of the rabi crop (? rains) the Sone Canals are expected to mature 250,000 acres of rabi, which may add 25 lakhs of maunds to the food supply of Behar. The canals will thus add 65 lakhs* of maunds of food for the people, and save thousands of lives before the end of March, 1897. Sixty-five lakhs of maunds equals 320,000,000 lbs., or 11,428,000 quarters. One lakh equals 100,000. One maund equals 40 seers; one seer equals 2 lbs." He and those who shared his views wanted to make sure that the Indian Government would keep a very watchful eye on this important question. The Indian Government were doing well with the railway problem, and he hoped they were not neglecting the irrigation problem.

MR. J. G. WEIR.

MR. WEIR regretted that the consideration of Indian questions had been deferred until the very last hours of the Session. He supported the demand of the hon. member for Banffshire for a village enquiry into the causes which blight the industry of the cultivators. That was a fair and reasonable request. It would be a very simple enquiry and a very inexpensive one, for it would be made not by the high officials of India, but in the villages among the people. He would point out that the rents of the cultivators had been raised five, six, and even ten times. What class of people could stand that? Rack renting had been tried in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland, with the result that the Government had to bring in measures to stop it. Why did not the Government adopt similar measures in regard to India? Instead of that, the Government in India collected taxes and rents from the cultivators at the time they were least able to meet those demands—viz., just before the harvest was gathered in. That was a monstrous system. The result of it was that the unfortunate rayat got into the grip of the money-lenders—

The SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member is merely repeating the arguments and phrases which have already been used by the hon. member for Banffshire. That is irregular.

MR. WEIR said he desired to call attention to the importance of irrigation. This was a question of very serious importance to the people of India. It had been brought forward by several members of the House that night, and it could not be pressed home too closely. He would ask the Government whether in this Jubilee year they would not consider whether they could place at the disposal of the Government of India such a sum as would enable the Government of India to carry out works which would prevent these famines.

The SPEAKER drew the attention of the House to the continued repetition of his own arguments and of those of other members by Mr. Weir, member for Ross and Cromarty, and directed him to discontinue his speech.

The following Resolution was thereupon agreed to by the Committee and reported to the House:—

Resolved, That it appears, by the Accounts laid before this House, that the Total Revenue of India for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1896, was Rx. 98,370,167; that the Total Expenditure in India and in England charged against the Revenue was Rx. 96,836,169; that there was a Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure of Rx. 1,533,998; and that the Capital Outlay on Railways and Irrigation Works was Rx. 4,087,194.

August 6.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.
THE "JUBILEE," THE FAMINE AND THE PLAGUE.

The LORD CHANCELLOR read the Queen's speech which contained the following references to India.

"The presence of the Representatives of the Colonies and of the Indian Empire at the ceremonies held in celebrations of

* This yield equals half the quantity imported by Government in 1873-74, which was known to be too much for the need of the time.

the sixtieth year of my reign has contributed to strengthen the bond of union between all parts of my Empire, and an additional proof of the attachment of the Colonies to the Mother Country has been furnished by the fiscal legislation of Canada, and by the contribution which the Cape Colony, following the example of Australasia, has offered to our naval defence.

"The famine which, to my profound grief, has prevailed throughout large portions of my Indian dominions since the autumn of last year has taxed severely the resources of that country. I gladly acknowledge the energy and self-sacrifice of my officers of all ranks, both Europeans and natives, and of many private persons, who, with untiring zeal, and with an anxious desire to avoid offence to native feeling, have laboured to save life and to relieve suffering. An appeal to the sympathy of my subjects in all parts of my Empire has been responded to in a most generous manner; and I rejoice to learn that, owing to a satisfactory rainfall, there is now every prospect that the area of distress will be very greatly diminished.

"The Plague, which caused a large number of deaths in certain districts in India during the earlier part of the year, has now almost disappeared. This improvement is mainly due to the energetic and judicious steps which were taken by the Local Governments to prevent it from spreading. Every precaution will be adopted in view of the possibility of its recurrence, but at present there is a steady decrease both in its prevalence and in its fatal effects."

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE SURRENDER OF FUGITIVE SLAVES.

Mr. THOMAS BAYLEY asked the Secretary of State for India whether there existed treaties between her Majesty's Government and Arab chiefs, such as the Sultan of Lahej, under which we undertook to surrender fugitive slaves:

Whether the practice of surrender of fugitive slaves also continued at Muscat:

And, whether, in the event of the practice not being known at the India Office enquiry would be made.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I am not aware of any treaties of the character described in the first question. I do not know to what the hon. member refers in the second question. Certain difficulties have arisen in dealing with the slave traffic in certain harbours of the Sultan of Muscat and in the Persian Gulf, and on this subject I am in correspondence with the Government of India.